



Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Regrets Perry's Remarks on Libyan Plant

NC0704154596 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
1510 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Apr (MENA) — The Arab League's General Secretariat today regretted news agencies' reports citing remarks attributed to U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry in which he did not rule out a U.S. military strike to prevent Libya from producing chemical weapons.

Commenting on press queries regarding these remarks, the Arab League General Secretariat noted that the timing of these remarks is inappropriate, coming at a time when the region is the scene of intensive international efforts by peacemakers. In addition, Libya has said repeatedly that it does not intend to produce any chemical weapons and denied the existence of any Libyan program to produce chemical weapons.

The General Secretariat noted that the Libyan position is in harmony with the Arab League resolutions on the need to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East. These resolutions emphasize that security and stability in the Middle East require the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction by turning the Middle East into a zone free of all nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, in accordance with the Security Council resolutions.

The General Secretariat underlined the need for all countries and their officials to devote their attention to resolving problems through quiet diplomacy without threatening to use violence and to motivate all the countries of the world to exert efforts to free the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Calls Israeli-Turkish Accord 'Hostile' Act

NC0804155596 *Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic* 1500 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League has expressed concern over and deep interest in the announcement that an agreement was signed between the Israeli and Turkish air forces allowing Israeli planes to use Turkish airfields. This is a hostile action and a threat to some Arab countries, especially Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, the Arab League said.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Asks Israel To Stop Settlement Measures

NC0804114596 *Cairo MENA in English*
1018 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, April 8 (MENA)—The Arab League voiced its concern over the Israeli authorities' confiscation of the Palestinian lands.

A statement issued here today by the League General Secretariat said that since the agreement on the redeployment of the Israeli Army, Israel has confiscated almost 18,000 square kilometers of Palestinian lands on the pretext of construction of roads to link Israeli settlements.

These Israeli measures create a fait accompli before the start of the final stage of negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The statement warned against the dangerous Israeli policy of Palestinian land confiscation saying that it gravely harms the peace process. The statement however underlined the League's keenness on the continuation of the peace march and averting all reasons for violence.

The League urged the countries that participated in the Summit of the Peacemakers to immediately intervene to bring to a halt the Israeli policy so that security and stability would be realized across the region.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Official Condemns Israel's Seizure of Land

NC0704140796 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
1305 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 7 Apr (MENA) — Ambassador Sa'id Kamal, Arab League assistant secretary general for Palestinian affairs, has denounced Israel's policy of seizing Palestinian territory. He described this policy that was stepped up after the start of the peace process in the region, as foolish, noting that Israel has seized 55 hectares of Arab land in Jerusalem.

Kamal called on the world community to act to stop this policy, which poses a great threat to the fate of the peace process and the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, amid the continuation of the policy of sanctions, closure, and suspension of economic life in Palestine.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Chirac, Arab League Chief Exchange Views on Peace

NC0804115396 *Cairo MENA in English*
1103 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, April 8 (MENA)—French President Jacques Chirac today hailed the Arab

League and said that he holds its Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid in high esteem as he plays an important role and exerts tremendous efforts in his job.

Following a meeting with Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid at the League's premises here, Chirac said Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid is a man of peace and is among the first ones to work for it. He described Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid as an old friend.

Chirac further said that he exchanged with Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid views pertaining to the Arab world and Europe and said both shared identical views on issues raised.

The Arab and the European worlds are linked with one destiny, he said, underlining that it is important to switch from war to peace and from confrontation to tolerance and mutual respect. This is best for all, he said.

The French president said that there is a mutual understanding between Arab and European leaders.

He stressed that there is nothing better than peace, adding that relations based on mutual respect should be established and solidarity must be realized. President Chirac expressed regret over suspension of the peace process at present.

He also expressed hope that the peace process would be resumed as soon as possible, especially on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

In his turn, Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid said that he is pleased with the visit paid by President Chirac to the League.

He expressed the depth of Arab-French relations.

Following his meeting with the French president, Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid said that what he heard from President Chirac, affirms the depth of Franco-Arab relations within the framework of Arab-French and Arab-Mediterranean partnership. There is also mutual confidence between the Arab and French sides, he added.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Prime Minister Opens Gulf Economic Conference in Bahrain

JN0904104796 Manama WAKH in Arabic
0850 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 9 Apr (WAKH) — His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, prime minister of Bahrain, opened the fourth Gulf Economic Conference here this morning. The conference is titled: "The Changing Face of the Middle East Economy" and is organized by the Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Information, in cooperation with the U.S. economic agency Dow Jones.

The prime minister gave a speech in which he said he hopes the conference will be successful and formulate resolutions that will boost regional and international economic cooperation. [passage omitted]

Inter-Arab Affairs: Palestinian Minister in Bahrain for Gulf Economic Forum

JN0804202196 Manama WAKH in Arabic
1850 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 8 Apr (WAKH) — Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international development in the Palestinian National Authority, arrived in Manama this evening on a visit to Bahrain. During the visit, Sha'th will attend the opening session of the Fourth Gulf Economic Forum, which will be held under the patronage of Prime Minister Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah tomorrow, Tuesday [9 April]. [passage omitted]

In statements to the GULF NEWS AGENCY, Dr. Nabil Sha'th said that the self-rule area in Palestine is going through a difficult stage because of the Israeli siege imposed on these areas. He noted that the Palestinian people are strong and that they derive their strength from brothers in Arab countries. He added that his visit to Bahrain comes to bolster the ties which bind the fraternal Bahraini and Palestinian people and reinforces their continuation in order to achieve future ambitions and aspirations.

Sha'th expressed optimism about the future and about Palestinian-Bahraini and Palestinian-Gulf relations, in general. He said there are many opportunities for investment in future Palestine and for joint investment and economic action. He noted that the Palestinian Authority is currently seeking to end the Israeli siege in order to proceed toward future Palestine.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Returns After 'Successful' Visit to Saudi Arabia

JN0804150496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic
1300 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned home today after concluding a fruitful visit to Saudi Arabia within an Arab tour aimed at urging Arab leaders to stand alongside the Palestinian people during the crisis resulting from the Israeli siege, and to offer all necessary support and aid.

President 'Arafat described his visit to Saudi Arabia as positive and successful. On arrival at the Presidential

Office in Gaza, the president said that he met with Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah, Prince Sultan, and Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal. They discussed a number of issues, including Arab solidarity. The president said that during his two-day visit, he briefed Saudi officials on the situation resulting from the siege. He said that he received promises from Saudi officials. President 'Arafat recently visited the United Arab Emirates at the outset of his Arab tour.

Palestinian Affairs: PA's Sha'th Departs for Bahrain

NC0804203196 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
1945 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Apr (MENA) — Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning in the Palestinian Authority [PA], left Cairo this afternoon for a week-long visit to Bahrain to participate in the Gulf countries economic conference. In a predeparture statement, he said that during his visit he will meet with Bahraini Heir Apparent Shaykh Hamad Bin-'Isa Al Khalifah and the ministers participating in the conference to brief them on the situation in the Palestinian arena. He said that he met with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa yesterday. They discussed the developments of the Palestinian position and the need for joint efforts to open the Rafah crossing-point for Palestinian exports and imports and to prevent Israel from repressing the Palestinian economy.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Welcomes Call For Dialogue With Authority

JN0904062396 *Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic*
0500 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), led by Dr. George Habash, welcomed the call made by Presidency Secretary General al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim for dialogue between the Palestinian Authority and the PLO factions.

An official PFLP source said the front has always called for adherence to democratic dialogue among the various political trends and factions to overcome the difficulties that face the Palestinian people.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Forms Committee for Dialogue With PFLP

JN0904102496 *Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic*
0900 GMT 9 Apr 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat, announced that President 'Arafat issued a decision today to form a committee to immediately start a national dialogue with the Popular

Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] in response to the higher interests of the Palestinian people.

The delegation, which is led by Presidency Secretary General al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, comprises a number of brothers, including presidential adviser Ahmad 'Abd-al-Rahman.

In an exclusive statement to the Voice of Palestine, Abu-Rudaynah praised the PFLP for welcoming dialogue between the National Authority and both the front and other PLO factions. He added that the National Authority and the PLO are eager to realize national unity.

The National Authority and the PLO called on all PLO factions to begin a national dialogue in order to realize the national objectives of the Palestinian people.

The PFLP said it welcomes a dialogue between the National Authority and both the front and other PLO factions. The front called for broadening the scope of dialogue to include various issues in order to work out a program that serves the higher national interest and confronts the challenges the Palestinian people are facing.

Palestinian Affairs: Deputy 'Ashrawi—Palestinians Losing Faith in Peace Process

LD0804163996 *Stockholm Sveriges Radio Network in Swedish* 1030 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] When the newly elected Palestinian parliament convened on the West Bank a couple of days ago, Yasir 'Arafat and members of parliament were met with taunts and jeers from demonstrating students. The entire Palestinian political situation is very explosive after the Israeli border closure, says member of parliament Hanan 'Ashrawi to this program:

[Begin 'Ashrawi recording, in English] People are not only losing faith in the peace process, they are losing faith in their own leadership, because they see it entirely immobilized. [end recording]

[Correspondent Cecilia Udden] The Palestinians are losing faith not only in the peace process, but also in their own leaders, says Hanan 'Ashrawi. She is probably the best known Palestinian member of parliament and also an indefatigable critic of Yasir 'Arafat's way of governing.

Now she warns of the consequences, not only of the Israeli border closure, but also of the Palestinian authorities' hunt for Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists. Even though the police claim the hunt has

yielded results and they managed to arrest three potential suicide bombers, the wave of arrests has made the police extremely unpopular. Last weekend Palestinian policemen with tear gas and batons stormed a university on the West Bank. The raid has been sharply criticized by the Palestinian parliament, Yasir 'Arafat had to have a reconciliation meeting with the students and he then transferred the police commanders responsible.

However, the tense situation in the West Bank and Gaza persists and Hanan 'Ashrawi says we have now got into the vicious circle which we warned against for so long.

[Begin 'Ashrawi recording, in English] Everybody is locked in the self-perpetuating vicious cycle of action and reaction and it has become self-feeding in a way which is grinding the whole peace process away into dust. Actually, if you want to look at it realistically, the peace process has stopped. [end recording] [passage omitted]

[Udden] Hanan 'Ashrawi, like Yasir 'Arafat, Nabil Sha'th, Abu-'Ala', Abu-Mazin and Dr Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi, and all the other politicians who have chosen to negotiate with Israel instead of fighting against the occupation with weapons, is today seriously concerned and disillusioned.

While the Palestinians are collectively punished by being locked out and unemployed, Jewish settlers are allowed to confiscate fresh land on the West Bank. The occupation is being perpetuated in new housing and new roads and this weekend a group of Jewish settlers are due to inaugurate a new exclusive shopping mall on occupied land.

Hanan 'Ashrawi fears that the Palestinian rage will boil over and will hit not only the Palestinians, but the whole region, Israel, the whole Arab world, she says, and presumably it will also underline political careers in other parts of the world.

[Begin 'Ashrawi recording, in English] When there is a breakdown or an explosion, [words indistinct] affect the Palestinians alone. The ripple effect and the repercussions will be felt here, in Israel, in the region, in the Arab world and will probably undermine many political careers elsewhere. [end recording]

That was said by Hanan 'Ashrawi who has a seat in the new Palestinian parliament. She was interviewed by our Middle East correspondent Cecilia Udden.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: 'Secret' Settler-PA Talks in Israel, England Reported

TA0704075996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
7 Apr 96 p A1

[Report by Ze'ev Schiff]

[FBIS Translated Text] Secret talks have been conducted for months in Israel and England by settlement leaders and Gush Emunim members on the one hand and senior Palestinian Authority [PA] representatives on the other. Specifics of the talks, one of the goals of which was to avert mutual violence, were communicated to Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, and before him, to his predecessor Yitzhaq Rabin. The talks were conducted under the auspices of the Jewish-American Committee and of Yosef Alpher, who heads the committee's Israel and Middle East desk.

The meetings in England were held under the auspices of the London-based International Security Fund. The fund had previously been instrumental in arranging meetings between U.S. and Russian officers.

The Israeli side to the talks was represented by NEQUDA editor Uri Elitzur; Professor Yosef Ben-Shlomo from Qedumim; Yisra'el Har'el from 'Ofra; Rabbi Eli'ezer Waldman from Qiryat Arba', who is considered a leading rabbinical authority among Gush Emunim followers and settlers; and Prof. 'Ozer Schild from Qedumim, formerly president of Haifa University. Some participants attended talks in Jerusalem, while others traveled to England.

The Palestinian side was represented by Muhammad Dahlan, head of the Palestinian Security Services in the Gaza Strip and one of Yasir 'Arafat's confidants; Hasan 'Asfur, a senior member of the Oslo talks and of all the ensuing official discussions with Israel, who was also associated with the permanent status talks with Minister Yosi Beilin's group; Khalil al-Shaqiqi, head of a Nabulus research institute; Sufyan Abu-Zayidah, an aide to Nabil Sha'th; Dr. Yazid Sayigh, a Cambridge professor, a former member of the Palestinian delegation to the negotiations with Israel, and a PA member of the multilateral committee on arms control.

The talks were kept very secret. Settlement representatives, who were evidently afraid of leaks, did not report them even to the Likud and national camp leaders.

Yosef Alpher, formerly the head of the Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University and currently a director at the Jewish-American Committee, is believed to be the initiator of these encounters. Surprised by

the publicity given to the talks, he refused to divulge any details. Asked to confirm that one of the talks venues was a location near Oxford, England, he agreed to discuss the matter in general terms: "This project was established to enable the senior representatives of two populations, whom circumstances have turned into political neighbors, to get to know one another. These are not political negotiations, but rather an opportunity to explore the ideological motives of the other party, at most. We wanted to explore the parameters of each side's flexibility at a time when the PA is establishing itself and when the various options of the permanent arrangement should be considered," Alpher said.

[HA'ARETZ] Were the sides willing to make mutual concessions?

[Alpher] I saw no concessions in matters of political ideologies, but there was a willingness to verbally set down the rules of the future game, including the need to

pursue a dialogue. Both sides agreed that it is important to avoid violence. [end Alpher]

Other members of both the Israeli and Palestinian teams equally refused to elaborate on the talks. Sufyan Abu-Zayidah from Gaza and Khalil al-Shaqqi from Nabulus replied: "No comment." Al-Shaqqi added: "I have already stated in an interview that the Jewish settlers in the territories will be able to stay there."

NEQUDA editor Uri Elitzur said he could not add anything beyond his report published in the settlers' magazine. Elitzur's signed article said that settlers should hold formal talks with their Palestinian neighbors. He referred to Hagay Kiberman's article in the latest issue of NEQUDA, which cited reports saying that right-wing members, including settlement people, and not only left-wing activists, have held discussions with Palestinians on issues pertaining to the permanent arrangement.

Algeria

Algeria: Foreign Ministry Denies U.S. Report on Contact With Israel

LDC804204596 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today's issue of AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has a statement attributed to Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state, in which he alludes to Algerian-Israeli contacts which could have taken place during the various multilateral meetings held within the framework of the Madrid conference, or on the sidelines of the recent summit in Sharm al-Shaykh.

In a statement released today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs categorically denies the allegation, and the charge d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy was summoned this afternoon to the ministry to offer an explanation regarding the untrue statements [plural as heard], which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has attributed to the U.S. assistant secretary of state.

Egypt

Egypt: French President Chirac Speaks on Regional Policy

NC0804105296 Cairo ESC Television in Arabic 0816 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Speech by French President Jacques Chirac to Cairo University students in Cairo University's Grand Celebration Hall on 8 April—live; in French, with simultaneous Arabic translation]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] My thanks to the president of the university, Dr. Mufid Shihab, for his warm welcome. I know his valuable contribution to Egyptian-French ties of friendship as president of this esteemed university and as chairman of the Consultative Council's Foreign Relations Committee. [passage omitted]

Today, before this honorable gathering symbolizing the Arab culture, I wish to discuss my vision regarding relations among France, Europe, the Arab world, and the Mediterranean. The Arab policy that France adopts is a basic aspect of its foreign policy. I am determined to boost this policy so that I can be faithful to General de Gaulle's instructions, when he told us in 1958: Every consideration has it that we should reappear in Cairo, Damascus, Amman, and all the capitals in the region, just as we have always been in Beirut—friends and aides. This vision still guides France's policy, which is based on several grand principles derived from a fine relationship woven by the French and Arabs long ago.

There are four principles on which France's foreign policy is based. A dialogue must be established between

us based on mutual respect for the personalities and identities of other people. Our devotion to human rights and values of justice, tolerance, and freedom — international values — should not prevent us from expressing these values in various forms based on the different cultures and traditions prevalent in each country. The second principle is that we care about people's right to free self-determination and confirm their independence and right to a secure life. France believes this essential principle must apply to all peoples without exception.

The third principle is that we support the Arab people's hopes for solidarity and unity. As we saw in Europe, there is no contradiction between independence and rapprochement. France supports the Arab League, just as it supports the regional groupings that have started emerging with force from East to West. The fourth principle is that we support the Arab world's hopes for peace and progress. France will stand alongside all those who fight extremism, fanaticism, and the forces of hatred, from which no side is immune, as bloody incidents in your region and in Europe reveal. France's Arab policy rests on these four principles. [passage omitted]

The top priority in France and Europe's Arab policy is represented in the peace programs in the Middle East. Late President al-Sadat was the first peacemaker. He paid with his life for the sake of peace. Late Israeli Prime Minister Rabin met the same fate. I must honor their memory.

The peace process launched with the Madrid conference overcame the [word indistinct] ideas and the various methods of opposition and violence, thanks to the courage of some statesmen and their resoluteness and ability to convince their peoples of the need to champion the cause of peace. Following long decades of confrontation, decisive progress was made toward peace, stability, and prosperity in the Middle East region, thanks to President Husni Mubarak, King Husayn, Prime Ministers Rabin and Peres, and President 'Arafat. The nations of this region must occupy their appropriate position.

The peace process is forging ahead. I am fully convinced of this. But the process might sometimes proceed slowly or meet delays because of extremists from various trends. This was proven by recent tragic events. Let us all, therefore, unify our efforts as we did at Sharm al-Shaykh for the sake of the peace to which our region's peoples aspire and for the sake of countering terrorism.

In these crucial times it behooves Europe to shoulder its responsibilities. Europe is doing so on the economic level by giving assistance to the Palestinian people.

This assistance is half of the total assistance being received by the Palestinian people. Europe's role should not be confined to finance. Europe must increase its political contributions to the peaceful settlement and must become a cosponsor of the settlement. The EU has so far played a crucial role in the multilateral talks and in preparing and supervising the Palestinian elections. This is a victory for democracy.

We must go beyond that to revive the peace process, taking into consideration everyone's interests and hopes of security. All the parties must honor all the agreements that have been signed. All the parties must abide by the timetable of the agreements. It is unacceptable for the peace process to stop half way. We must find a balanced and just agreement involving all the parties concerned with the final status of the Palestinian territories in accordance with the land-for-peace principle.

This agreement must handle the more difficult issues, such as Jerusalem, the refugees, and the future of settlements. There will be no just peace without respect for the Palestinian people's right to determine their future and achieve their legitimate aspirations to set up their own state. The lasting peace dictates that Israel's secure life must be guaranteed. Any progress toward confirming the Palestinian identity would uproot the terrorist danger, which is growing in the soil of isolation, bitterness, and frustration. Security cannot be guaranteed unless it is with mutual recognition and gradual confidence-building.

Peace also means the peace process must continue. This year, 1996, must be the year of decision. Syria and Israel still need to realize a peace agreement, the bases for which are clear: Full withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for comprehensive peace. The conditions for a settlement between Lebanon and Israel seem easy in comparison. There is no territorial conflict between the two countries. Lebanon must retrieve its full sovereignty over its national territory. France is ready to participate, with all its abilities and within the framework of the peace agreements, in the mechanisms and necessary security guarantees if the parties concerned ask it to do so.

But these agreements remain fragile and exposed to danger as long as no one takes the necessary steps to introduce peace into the minds and hearts of the people. The Arabs and Israelis are called upon to coexist in a spirit of understanding in the Middle East region of tomorrow. Peace in the Middle East also necessitates containing the tension and building relations in which trust prevails among the neighboring Gulf countries. My country stood alongside these countries during the wars that raged in them. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, France,

alongside the United States, the United Kingdom, Egypt, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, took part in the operation to liberate Kuwait and support the law after it did all it could to avert the war. Now that five years have gone by since these events, Iraq can now regain its status in the international community. There is only one way to do so. This is why the Iraqi authorities must understand the situation well. In other words Iraq must abide by Security Council resolutions that define the framework of international legitimacy. Iraq must implement these resolutions. But the Security Council and international community must also abide by these resolutions. I clearly announce that if Iraq implements all the resolutions issued on Iraq, the sanctions will be lifted. The international community cannot sit back with its arms folded while human rights in Iraq deteriorate.

Iraq's return to the international community will undoubtedly accompany the return of strong relations between Baghdad and its neighbors in the Gulf Cooperation Council, which is linked by very strong relations with France. The Orient, from the Gulf to the Mediterranean, enjoys a deep unity of views and principles. It also has some statesmen who are characterized by their deep vision regarding comprehensive ideas on how to organize things in the region. Within the scope of security, France grants its full support to President Husni Mubarak's proposal on setting up a region free of weapons of mass destruction. This project must naturally include mechanisms for supervision and control. France proposes that this project must be accompanied by confidence-building measures and conflict-settlement mechanisms.

Peace in the Middle East also needs an economic group, so that this region, like Europe after World War II, can gradually build in the economic domain until integration is reached. Europe could share its experience with others in a way that would benefit them. It could benefit them with its assistance, finance, and modern technology. The aspired goal is to establish a zone of prosperity and welfare that is marked by the freedom of movement of individuals and goods. Such an edifice cannot be attained except in a gradual and practical manner, so that it would limit the gap in growth levels.

In this regard, France proposes the enhancement of the role of the regional economic development's working team within the multilateral talks. Some other regional economic projects will have to materialize to give cohesiveness and unity to this common domain. I am confident that the coming economic conference for the Middle East and North Africa, scheduled to be held in Cairo at the end of this year, will usher in a new stage in the march following the Casablanca and Amman conferences. France would like today to put forward

a proposal in a very sensitive field; namely, water. Water, which has been the cause of conflicts, could become an element of cooperation tomorrow. Let us try to avoid the possibility of an outbreak of war over water, in addition to the war over territory. Let us prepare a regional charter that defines an acceptable mechanism for joint administration in the field of water. Let us establish an international institute for water and development in the Middle East. The Arabs, Israelis, and Europeans should pool all their skills together to determine and implement other projects that serve regional integration and rapprochement among peoples. I can cite as examples agricultural, tourism, and other researches. We also must go farther than that by broadening our horizons. France and Egypt share another great goal; namely, the establishment of a Mediterranean group.

Contrary to what may be said sometimes, the notion of Mediterraneanism is a modern political concept. Since the collapse of the Roman empire, the Mediterranean has been an arena for various types of military and trade competition. France today would like to turn the Mediterranean into an arena for political linkage. After the destruction of the Berlin Wall in the East, Europe must build a bridge toward the south. For this reason, France initiated a European-Mediterranean conference, which was held in Barcelona in November. [passage omitted]

Egypt: French President Visits Alexandria Before Leaving

NC0804154496 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon, President Muhammad Husni Mubarak saw French President Jacques Chirac off at the al-Qubbah Palace where Egypt's prominent guest stayed during his visit. The French President left for Alexandria at the end of his visit to Egypt, which will conclude later today. He is accompanied by Faruq Husni, minister of culture and head of the escort team; Egypt's Ambassador in Paris 'Ali Mahir; and French Ambassador in Cairo Patrick Leclercq.

Egypt: French President Chirac Leaves Alexandria

NC0804180296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1720 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Alexandria, 8 Apr (MENA) — French President Jacques Chirac left Alexandria this evening ending a three-day official visit to Egypt during which he held talks with President Husni Mubarak.

This afternoon, President Chirac paid a brief visit to the city of Alexandria where he saw relics found underwater that have been discovered through Egyptian and French cooperation.

He was seen off at al-Nuzhah International Airport by Egyptian Minister of Culture Faruq Husni who was the head of the delegation that accompanied the French president during his stay in Egypt.

The Governor of Alexandria Counselor Isma'il al-Jawsaqi, political and public figures in the governorate, the French ambassador in Cairo, members of the embassy, and France's consul general in Alexandria also saw the French president off.

Egypt: France's De Charette Views Chirac's Visit, Peace, Iraq

NC0804164996 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] French Foreign Minister Herve De Charette described President Jacques Chirac's visit to Egypt as one of the most important visits he has made to the region. He said the purpose of the visit was to emphasize France's active role in the region, to explain France's policy toward the Arab and Mediterranean world, and to underline France's political, economic, and cultural presence in the region.

In a news conference he held at the conclusion of the French president's visit to Egypt, De Charette said France is strongly willing to play a role in the Middle East peace process. He said this was emphasized by President Chirac on various occasions. The French foreign minister stressed the need to resume peace negotiations in the region, and he pointed out that the achievement of peace needs swift measures to save the Palestinian people and advance the peace process. He said peace between Syria and Israel will not be at the expense of Lebanon and its sovereignty over its territory.

De Charette praised the warm welcome given to the French president during his visits to Egypt and Lebanon. He said everyone stressed the need for Europe, in general, and France, in particular, to play a role in solving the problems of the region based on France's known principles of encouraging participation, dialogue, independence of people, and collective initiatives.

De Charette stressed President Chirac's willingness to see Iraq return to the Arab family. He said France is giving special attention to this issue. Noting that negotiations are under way for Iraq to implement the UN Security Council resolutions, he said the responsibility is now with Iraq. De Charette said his country is willing to

participate effectively in future negotiations to establish peace in the Middle East. He said cooperation between Europe and the Middle East and the Gulf region is diversified and moving in one direction [as heard]. He noted that many conferences and meetings were held within the framework of this cooperation, and that there is no contradiction between them [as heard].

On France's mediation between Yemen and Eritrea over al-Hanish island, he said France committed itself to this mission at the request of the United Nations and the concerned parties. He said France asked Egypt to join this effort because of its weight in the region. He said proposals have been presented to Yemen and its response is still being awaited.

Egypt: Musa—Israeli-Turkish Aviation Accord Creates Tension

NC0804152796 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
1455 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a new comment on the signing of an aviation agreement between Israel and Turkey, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has said that any action of this kind will result in an equally strong reaction.

Today, commenting during the the opening of the al-Qasr al-'Ayni Hospital attended by Presidents Husni Mubarak and Jacques Chirac, Musa said: Those who invent new forms [of alliances] in the region must know that every action has a reaction.

He warned that the agreement — if reports about it are true — may create new unjustified tensions in the Middle East.

Egypt: Israeli-Turkish Military Agreement Viewed

NC0804133996 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
1215 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ankara, 8 Apr (MENA)—A responsible source at the Israeli Embassy in Turkey confirmed the signing of an agreement for strategic military cooperation between Turkey and Israel.

In a statement to a MENA correspondent in Turkey, the source noted that Israeli aircraft will arrive in Turkey soon to train in Turkish airports and airspace, adding that the training programs for the Israeli planes are currently being prepared so that they may arrive at specific dates within this year. He pointed out that the agreement had been concluded during the visit of General Cevik Bir, Turkish deputy chief of staff, to Israel in February.

Diplomatic sources today emphasized that several capitals are following the recent Turkish-Israeli military

agreement and its possible repercussions on the overall situation and developments in the Middle East. The same sources noted that in the forefront of these capitals is Cairo, which is closely watching this issue with much interest. Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa expressed this interest when he emphasized that this issue is under strict scrutiny by Egypt, which cannot tolerate any tampering with the region's security.

The same sources noted that the concern raised by the agreement, which was first announced in 18 March, is not without a cause, since the objectives of the agreement are still unknown and in view of the delicate and serious security situation in a region that is still trying to establish pillars of stability and peace.

Turkish Defense Minister Oltan Sungurlu yesterday denied that the agreement between his country and Israel included opening Turkish airspace and military bases to Israeli troops. However, he admitted that the agreement provides for the exchange of information and expertise in the field of military training, noting that under the agreement Turkey and Israel will conduct joint exercises, details of which are yet to be announced.

Diplomatic sources believe that the dimensions of the Turkish-Israeli military agreements are vague. Until this vagueness clears and the final goals of the agreement materialize, the issue is expected to cause tension and controversy in the concerned capitals in the region. The same sources expect extensive contacts on this issue in the coming weeks in a bid to clarify these dimensions and ease the anxiety caused by this agreement, which is particularly striking since it provides for the establishment of a "security forum for strategic dialogue between Israel and Turkey." According to unofficial sources, this "forum" seeks to repulse what is described as the "mutual dangers" facing both Israel and Turkey and lay down a mechanism for confronting them. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Foreign Minister Musa Confers With PA's Sha'th

NC0804165196 *Cairo MENA in Arabic*
1625 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Apr (MENA) — Today, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa met with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of international cooperation in the Palestinian Authority (PA), who is currently visiting Cairo. Musa said that the talks dealt with the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the adverse effects of the continuing Israeli siege. He noted that the talks at the Egyptian-Palestinian meetings also touched on coordination.

Egypt: Petroleum Minister on Oil, Gas Discoveries, Gas Exports to Israel*NC0804182196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1540 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 8 Apr (MENA) — Egyptian Minister of Petroleum Dr. Hamdi al-Banbi has asserted that oil cooperation with Israel is inevitable on the grounds that Israel is the main outlet for the export of natural gas to Europe, mainly to Turkey.

At a meeting with Egyptian businessmen today, al-Banbi denied that the Suez Canal will suffer any side effects when gas is, in the future, transported to the Israeli Port of Elat from Egypt's Ra's Shukhayr.

The minister emphasized that the al-salam [peace] line — through which a portion of Egyptian natural gas will be taken to Israel — is part of a plan to export natural gas to Palestine, Jordan, Israel, and Turkey at the start of regional cooperation in the Middle East as a transitional step toward linkage with European and Mediterranean countries.

Al-Banbi commented on competition between Egypt and other countries that produce natural gas and its effect on the Suez Canal. He emphasized that negotiations with Israel must be marked by a very high degree of patience and self-restraint. He added that there should be a planned, clear vision — without which there can be no dealing with any country in the Middle East.

Dr. al-Banbi said oil exploration operations have resulted in 98 oil finds in various areas. He added that, of these, 61 were discoveries of crude oil with a daily output of approximately 110,000 barrels and 37 were gas discoveries yielding approximately 940 million cubic feet per day.

The minister pointed out that 15 agreements to drill 78 new exploratory wells were signed with 14 international companies in the year 1994-1995. In addition, he said, an agreement was signed during the first quarter of 1995-1996 with the Russian company (Komi), which is operating in Egypt for the first time, and an agreement with the U.S. company Occidental was amended.

He said Egypt's production comes from four key areas: 81 percent from the Gulf of Suez, 11 percent from the western desert, 5 percent from Sinai, and 3 percent from the eastern desert.

Dr. al-Banbi said there will be no increase in the price of any petroleum products at present, explaining that in the future prices will be pegged to international market prices.

He said that work to develop the Bur Fu'ad onshore field will begin in the coming days. This field produces

about 80 million cubic feet of gas daily. He added that the well was discovered in October of last year.

Al-Banbi noted that the petroleum sector is working to secure Egypt's national petroleum resources by achieving self-sufficiency in natural (?gas) in 1998, adding that gas consumption in 1995 reached approximately 9.6 million tons.

Explaining Egypt's petroleum policy, the minister said the current natural gas production of 436 million cubic feet will increase fourfold in 10 years. He added that reserves of gas and gas derivatives have also increased, to 22.3 trillion cubic feet.

Al-Banbi said the petroleum ministry was ready to allow Egyptian, Arab, and foreign private sectors to set up investment companies to distribute gas and petroleum products and to build refineries with national capital.

Libya**Libya: Secretariat Denounces Israeli-Turkish Military Agreement***LD0804135596 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio
Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] The Secretariat of the General People's Committee for Unity has expressed its surprise and denunciation of an agreement, reported by the media, between the Turkish Government and the Israeli enemy and the facilities granted by Turkey for the movement of Israeli war planes to carry out fighting, reconnaissance, and spying missions.

In a statement the Secretariat said: The agreement is aimed at the Arab nation and its interests and is also against the Muslims. It constitutes a wide gap through which the Israelis will encircle the region and achieve a serious logistic breach in line with their plans to contain the region and draw it according to their interests.

This agreement will certainly not serve the deep-rooted historical relations between the Arabs and the Turks, nor will it serve Turkey's interests. Turkey cannot, through this agreement, achieve political and economic gains by losing the friendship of its Arab brethren or by entering the hotbeds of tension and conflict which the Israelis are intent on setting alight in the region.

Sudan**Sudan: Sadiq al-Mahdi—'Stalemate' Reached in Talks With al-Bashir***AB0804130296 London BBC World Service
in English 1705 GMT 7 Apr 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There was an unprecedented meeting in Sudan last week between the head of

state, General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, and Sadiq al-Mahdi, the man he overthrew six years ago — Sadiq who is Sudan's last elected civilian prime minister. Since 1989, political parties have been banned in Sudan. But last month, Gen. al-Bashir emerged as the winner of a nonparty presidential election which the opposition boycotted. And the man widely seen as the power behind the Islamic oriented military regime in Khartoum, the National Islamic Front [NIF] leader, Hasan al-Turabi, has been appointed speaker of the new National Assembly. Wednesday's [3 April] meeting was held at the request of Gen. al-Bashir. Later, our reporter Alfred Taban, asked Sadiq al-Mahdi how the talks went.

[Begin recording] [al-Mahdi] Well, I am not going to go into details but I think that the situation between us, the opposition, and the government, is now in a kind of stalemate. The government's position has been legalized at the same time the opposition's position is quite clear. The opposition will not accept any kind of dealings that do not lead to reelection for a democratic government whose credentials are accepted by all.

[Taban] What you are saying is that you were not able to agree with anything with Gen. Bashir?

[Al-Mahdi] I say that there were lots of aspirations but concretely, I think the situation is irreconcilable.

[Taban] Why is it irreconcilable?

[Al-Mahdi] Because, as I say, the position of the regime has acquired a more inflexible position. This inflexible position has been made more inflexible by the fact that the indirect role of the National Islamic Front has become more direct. The cadre of the Islamic National Front now controls the legislative body of the country. It controls the single political party of the regime, and this make any kind of real agreement rather impossible.

[Taban] Before the voting in the current elections started, you described the elections as a sham. Do you still believe the elections were a sham?

[Al-Mahdi] Of course, I believe that the elections have done nothing more than to allow the NIF to elect NIF. It is true there are many elements, members, in the present National Congress who are not NIF. However, NIF are the only organized group within the current and present institutions. So they are the ghost in the machine.

[Taban] But it is you in the Ummah party who boycotted the elections. Why did you not participate in order to help your people also in the parliament?

[Al-Mahdi] Yes we boycotted the elections because we did not have the assurance that they will be free and fair. The elections are run under circumstances of martial law, security has only means to interfere, and the members of the regime had a party behind them. Others were not allowed to have any organization behind them, and so on.

[Taban] So you believe that the election of Hasan al-Turabi as speaker, will not help political rapprochement in the country?

[Al-Mahdi] I think it was an unadvisable move because the old tactic which was followed before that was a tactic of more.... [pauses] of an attempt to persuade the public opinion in Sudan that the character of the regime is more nationalist. So for the regime to go one step further in emphasizing the party and nature of the regime is unadvisable [sentence as heard]. [end recording]

Sudan: Visiting Yemeni Deputies Discuss New Political System

EA0904101996 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 2245 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Ghazi Salah al-Din, the secretary general of the national congress's secretariat, met at his office today Mr. 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-Rawhani and Mr. Abdullah al-Maqalih, members of the Yemeni assembly of deputies.

In a press statement following the meeting, the two Yemeni deputies said that they discussed the [Sudanese] new political system experiment, its characteristics, and its relations with international organizations as well as the national congress's secretariat.

The Yemeni deputies expressed their admiration for the experiment and stressed that Sudan is striving for cooperation with all parties to serve the joint Arab-Islamic action.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: King Voices Concern Over Muslims' Rights in Bosnia

LD0904093396 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
2335 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jeddah, 8 Apr — King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, expressed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's interest in the Bosnian situation following the implementation of the military section of the Dayton peace agreement.

He said: "It is regrettable that the Croats refuse to abide by the Dayton peace agreement and that they insist on preventing Muslim refugees from going back to their homes, dividing Mostar and preventing its Muslim people from crossing over to the section controlled by the Croats."

The custodian of the two holy mosques expressed the Kingdom's stance during the meeting of the Council of Ministers chaired by him, may God preserve him, this evening, Monday [8 April], at the Salam Palace in Jeddah. [passage omitted]

King Fahd reiterated the kingdom's stance vis-a-vis the Gulf Cooperation Council, which aims to maintain the region as an oasis where security and stability prevail, so that the Gulf societies' people can take part in the development of their countries in accordance with their mutual aspirations. [passage omitted]

King Fahd said: "We pray that God will help us to serve our citizens better than we do now, for we are totally convinced that the best investment is in the development of the Saudi individual so that he can be an industrious member of his society, country, and community." [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Effects of Split in Dissident Group Assessed

MS0904091096 London THE GUARDIAN in English
9 Apr 96 p 9

[Report by David Hirst: "Exiles' Schism Boosts Saudis"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh — No sooner had Mohammed al-Mas'ari won his hearing against deportation to Dominica on March 5 than his Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) fell apart. There are now two London-based dissident Saudi groups: the re-organised CDLR, which he heads, and a new rival, the Islamic Reform Movement, headed by his former deputy, Sa'ad al-Faqih.

The CDLR's break-up received far less attention in Britain than the Saudis — official and otherwise — think it should have. Senior princes with little experience of the outside world harbour resentments towards the British government. But a younger, liberal, British-educated prince said the British media were chiefly to blame.

"Some of us are losing faith in the values you claim to represent. You made such a fuss of them as political refugees, but you never really looked into Mas'ari's chequered personal and professional past — his real beliefs. And now that with this scandal, they have come out in their true colours, you have lost interest. You just ignore them.

"Can't you see that it's people like Mas'ari who, in their backwardness, delay rather than promote progress in our country; that it's thanks to them, not me, that my wife must wear a veil, or cannot drive?"

By contrast, it is with undisguised relish that the Saudi media — especially those, like the London-based AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT newspaper, owned by the House of Sa'ud — have given details of the "war of communiques" between the dissident dissidents. They take an understandable pleasure in how, as the Saudi ambassador said, "each now violates the legitimate rights of the other".

The founder of the CDLR is Mr Mas'ari's father, Abdallah, aged 80, a former Sharia judge. AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT carries the text of the letter that Dr Faqih sent him explaining the break-up. When he first joined Mr Mas'ari in London, Dr Faqih said, he thought he was a man of sound belief and upright conduct. But he changed his mind.

He also accused Mr Mas'ari of contacts with the "CDLR military wing", which was allegedly behind the car bomb that killed four Americans in Riyadh last November. Ideologically, he said, Mr Mas'ari had Mu'tazilite leanings. The Mu'tazilites were a free-thinking medieval sect that tried to blend faith with reason. Today's fundamentalists use the term as an insult.

Defending his son, Abdallah called Dr Faqih's accusations "unworthy of a true Muslim". In the arch-conservative province of Qasim, where Dr Faqih comes from, the local CDLR denounced him, too.

The House of Sa'ud would have been saintly not to exploit these personal charges, along with the ideological schism. It has been the target of similar charges from the CDLR, and it hopes they will tarnish the moral pretensions of the whole Islamist opposition.

One expert on the Islamists said: "It is a golden opportunity for the regime to portray Mas'ari and Faqih as extremist nuts. I never could understand how this pair could work together."

For Mr Mas'ari, it now transpires, has links with the tiny extremist Tahrir party, originating in Jordan, while Dr Faqih is more of a classical Muslim Brother.

The expert added: "They get on with each other about as well as Stalinists and Maoists once did. I forecast that Mas'ari will now descend into silly radicalism, calling for such things as the re-establishment of the Caliphate."

Saudi society breaks down into two main camps — Westernised liberals and various shades of Islamists. The Islamist schism is a relief to the liberals, who had mixed feelings about Mr Mas'ari from the outset. They could admire his courage and ingenuity. His fax war against the royal family "did something we all wanted to do, but cannot from inside the kingdom", one liberal said. They could also support his demands for the reform of public policy and practice — against corruption, inefficiency, repression, huge arms deals.

But the enthusiasm wore off. One liberal said: "It became a bit like reading the SUN or the NEWS OF THE WORLD, and we don't have to go to London to learn which princes take commissions, which ministers abuse their positions. It was almost as if the two, unable to agree on fundamentals, resorted to trash propaganda instead. Besides, they got so much wrong."

Anything that relieves the liberals embarrasses the Islamists. The broad goal of the Islamists — or those who think like Mr Mas'ari — is revolutionary, almost unique, in Muslim history: a clerically led state, with religious "commissars" in every department, which would probably be even more archaic and totalitarian in spirit than Khomeini's Iran.

Ominously for the regime, they draw their main strength from the same constituency as it does — the deeply devout, conservative Nejd heartland. The CDLR's establishment in London was a shrewd move, since it placed the Islamist struggle in the context of the worldwide human rights movement where — given some of its members' obscurantist beliefs — it does not belong.

Now, with their narrow sectarian rivalries exposed, it will be harder for the exile groups to command the support of Western liberals.

At home, the Islamist movement has never been united, being composed of individual preachers and coteries in universities and religious organisations. The CDLR break-up will add to confusion in Islamist ranks.

The sense of impending national crisis brought on by the Islamists' ascent has eased. This should give the regime a breathing space to roll them back — not through repression and imprisonment, but through the reform of official policies that helped breed them in the first place.

One liberal said: "It is all very well for the government to attack Britain for giving Mas'ari refuge; he and his like are its own creation."

The House of Sa'ud has always been more forward-looking than the state-appointed ulema (religious scholars) who, in theory at least, share authority with it, and often more than the populous. But in its obsession with proving itself Islamically irreproachable, it helped create the moral climate in which the Islamists emerged.

It gave free rein to its official clerical establishment on any matters of rite, theology and jurisprudence where its own legitimacy was not called into question. Yet nothing so resembles Shaykh Bin-Baz — the regime's top cleric and author of a learned treatise proving the earth to be flat — as much of the Islamist opposition.

They are his disciples in Wahhabism. They turned against him only because he maintained that the House of Sa'ud was a true upholder of this most puritanical of Muslim schools, while they decided it was not.

This fight between establishment and dissident Wahhabism is often abstruse. But it is intimately bound up with the contradictions of a land split between ancient and modern, native and universal, stifling social and cultural conventions and abundant financial and technological resources.

One moderate Islamist said: "Look at the dichotomy. Bin Baz and the ulema say interest amounts to 'war on God' [grievous sin], but not only are interest-based banks everywhere, true Islamic banks are forbidden. They say women should cover their faces, not drive or mix with men, but then on TV we see ladies in nightgowns and there are hair-stylists all over the place."

In the current climate of religiosity, it would not be surprising if young men took Shaykh Bin-Baz at his word and bombed banks. No one knows who planted the car bomb that killed four Americans, but many say it was an "Afghan" — one of those militant idealists whom Saudi Arabia sent to Afghanistan to fight the Russians, and who returned thinking their own government was a godless US — supported abomination.

Islamism may be in retreat but it will revive if the regime does not change the agenda and address the real political and economic issues that face it, instead of competing in the show of Islamic virtue.

A liberal said: "I have no special liking for the ruling family, but I would, if necessary, take a gun and fight with them against those, like Mas'ari, who would lead us back to the Stone Age. We need reforms which make that unnecessary."

"The real danger does not come from the politically motivated extremists, but from the brainwashing of our youth — in religion at the expense of real achievement — on which the extremists thrive."

Saudi Arabia: Dissident Labels Saudi Regime 'Hypocrites'

MS0904092196 London THE GUARDIAN in English
9 Apr 96 p 19

["Letter" by Professor Muhammad al-Mas'ari: "A Fax From al-Mas'ari"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] David Hirst spent too much time in the sun in Riyadh or perhaps he fell into bad company (Satellites evade Saudi censors, April 3).

The Saudi opposition is fighting for an elected, accountable government in our country. Surely this is more than a shade different from the Saudi regime which has never permitted any elections at any time in its history?

Of course, the basic "constitution" of Arabia would be Islamic; 99.99 per cent of our people are sincere Muslims. Why is that different from the German constitution, for example, which requires a commitment to democracy and against fascism from its electoral political parties?

Mr Hirst says that our rulers are "fundamentalist". Untrue. They are hypocrites who cloak themselves in their own mutilated version of Islam while violating each and every tenet of the Koran.

The Saudi opposition stands for an independent judiciary and a free press able to criticise it and the elected government. How different from the Riyadh visited by Mr Hirst where the only free information available came by fax from us or via the satellite — except when the Saudi-owned Orbit Communications in Rome blacks out the BBC broadcasts; and where judges are placement of the tyrants.

As a former political prisoner of Al'Hair prison who was tortured there, I am afraid that I did not enjoy the air-conditioned splendour of the jail as described by Mr Hirst.

He is wrong too about women drivers. The regime banned them as "un-Islamic"; we demand women's right to drive.

Mr Hirst says that "all Saudi fundamentalists end up taking the Christian West as their models". When Mr Gandhi was asked what he thought of "Western civilisation" he replied: "Yes I think that would be a good idea." The Saudi regime exists only because of the West which, in return, turns a blind eye to Saudi corruption, hypocrisy and cruelty.

Iraq: New Round of Oil-for-Food Talks With UN Starts

JN0804200396 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1915 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 8 Apr (INA)—Delegations from Iraq and the United Nations this afternoon, New York time, started the third round of talks on the issue of oil in return for food, medicine, and the basic needs of the Iraqi people.

The delegations, headed by Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari and Hans Corell, this afternoon started the first session of the new round of talks between Iraq and the United Nations.

In statements to journalists before the start of the first session of the third round, Dr. al-Anbari said he hopes this round will be more successful than the previous one.

He said the two sides did not face a dead end in the previous round. Instead, he said, they agreed to continue the talks to bridge the gap, which was not very big. He said: Any one who says otherwise is either unserious or has bad intentions because we and the United Nations are working seriously and with good intentions.

The head of the Iraqi delegation reaffirmed his hope that this will be the final round of the dialogue with the United Nations. He said the Iraqi leadership has from the very start sought to arrive at practical measures and an agreement on the issue of oil in return for food, medicine, and other basic needs. [passage indistinct]

Iraq: UN, Iraqi Officials Express Hope for Oil-for-Food Talks

JN0804141396 Baghdad INA in Arabic
1351 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The United Nations, 8 Apr (INA)—The third round of the dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations over the issue of oil for food, medicine, and the other basic needs of the Iraqi people are expected to resume later tonight, Baghdad time.

The head and members of the Iraqi delegation arrived in New York at dawn today Baghdad time, and agreed on the time to start the sessions of the third round of the dialogue.

In a related development, the United Nations said at noon today that UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali hopes progress will be achieved in the new session of dialogue with Iraq to begin at the UN headquarters later today, Monday.

Official UN Deputy Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi said that the secretary general is as optimistic as he was in the past.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari will head the Iraqi delegation while Legal Adviser Hans Corell will head the UN delegation.

UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali returned to New York from his European and Asian trip on 6 April.

The official UN deputy spokesman said that Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali is closely following the talks, attaches great importance to them, and hopes the two delegations will agree on a formula that will help alleviate the Iraqi people's sufferings and enable foodstuffs and medicines to reach all parts of Iraq.

In a speech marking the Ba'th Party's 49th anniversary yesterday, Culture and Information Minister 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur said he hopes the dialogue sessions with the United Nations will produce positive results. He stressed that Iraq unquestionably seeks to render this dialogue a success, and that this Iraqi desire should be viewed as an additional factor enhancing Iraq's firm legal right to have the UN Security Council fulfill its obligations toward Iraq by implementing Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687 as a prelude to terminating the unjust embargo imposed on Iraq.

Iraq: Al-Anbari Comments on Start of Latest Round of UN Talks

JN0904084096 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0620 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 9 Apr (INA)—Iraqi and UN experts will hold a technical meeting today, 9 April, to study some of the issues related to the ongoing dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations on the issue of selling oil to buy food, medicine, and other basic needs of the Iraqi people.

During the first official session of the third round of talks yesterday evening, both sides agreed that their experts should meet today. Today's meeting will be followed by another expanded meeting.

During the third round's first session, both sides discussed issues that were not discussed in the previous round of talks, which ended 21 March. Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari is leading the Iraqi delegation to the dialogue. UN Legal Adviser Hans Corell is leading the UN delegation.

In a statement to journalists before the start of the first session of the new round of talks, al-Anbari expressed hope that the dialogue will succeed. He noted that

both sides agreed to continue the dialogue to tackle more issues, adding that both delegations are working seriously and with good intentions.

Asserting the importance of this round of dialogue, the head of the Iraqi delegation said the Iraqi leadership has, from the start, sought to arrive at practical steps and an agreement on the issue of oil in return for food, medicine, and other basic needs. Al-Anbari added that the delegation will take positive steps to reach an agreement. He announced that the pumping of the Iraqi oil will begin within three weeks after an agreement is reached with the United Nations.

Corell said the third round of talks will build on the results of the previous round of talks.

Iraq: Al-Khazraji Reportedly To Move From Jordan to Syria

JN0804115396 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic
8 Apr 96 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD learned that intensive efforts are being exerted by Iraqi opposition leaders to settle Iraqi General Nizar al-Khazraji in Damascus. Iraqi opposition sources said that this matter has been decided by Gen. al-Khazraji and that he is waiting for the Syrians' to approve his stay in Damascus.

An Iraqi opposition source disclosed that the Iraqi opposition is planning to move the Iraqi opposition leaders from the Jordanian capital because of differences between the two sides.

Iraq: Biography of New Assembly Speaker Hammadi Profiled

JN0804124096 Baghdad INA in English
1130 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, April 8, INA—Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi was born in Karbala' Province in 1930.

-He got the PH.D. degree in the field of agrarian reform from the American University of Wisconsin.

-He was appointed minister of agrarian reform on 8 February 1963 revolution when the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party assumed power and was relieved of his post in November of the same year.

-In October 1968, he was appointed member of the Planning Board.

-In November 1968, he was appointed chairman of the Board of Directors of the Iraqi National Oil Company till 3 May 1975.

-He was appointed minister of oil and minerals on 31 December 1969 and he became member of the

Iraqi delegation to the negotiations with the foreign oil companies operating in Iraq which resulted in the decision of oil nationalization on 1 June 1972.

-He was appointed minister of foreign affairs on 11 November 1974.

-He was elected on 27 June 1982 member of the Iraq's Regional Command of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party in the light of the decisions of the 9th regional conference.

-On 25 January 1983, he was appointed minister of state at the Presidency Office.

-On 21 December 1984, he was elected member of the National Assembly and became the speaker of the assembly on 1 November in the same year.

-He was elected unanimously member of the Revolution Command Council on 2 August 1986.

-He was appointed minister of state for foreign affairs on 25 July 1988.

-On 5 June 1989, he was relieved of his post and was appointed deputy prime minister.

-He was appointed prime minister on 23 March in 1991 and was relieved of his post in September 1991.

-He was appointed counselor in the Presidency Office on 5 November 1991.

-He chaired the committee of honoring the scientists and innovators in Iraq and chaired the Iraqi Economists Society.

-He worked in journalism and he was the editor-in-chief of a number of Iraqi and Arab magazines and newspapers and he was the author of many political, ideological and economic books.

Iraq: Opposition Conference Calls For Lifting of Blockade

JN0604135496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1115 GMT 6 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of their meeting in Damascus yesterday, Iraqi opposition leaders urged the Arab League to work to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people and lift the blockade imposed on them. They noted the need to establish a national Iraqi nucleus for action soon.

The closing statement of the consultative meeting, which was attended by opposition leaders, says that the conference participants urged the Arab League states to work to ease the Iraqi people's suffering, support their fair struggle, and lift the siege imposed on them.

The statement adds that the participants reached consensus on the general need to establish a national Iraqi nucleus for change from among the various political forces. The process of change, the statement notes, should primarily depend on the efforts of the Iraqi people, who are looking forward to a unified Iraq in which brotherhood prevails, which enjoys security and stability and is committed to the political constants and the Iraqi people's unity and interests.

The statement says that the conference participants discussed the future system of Iraq, including its general dimensions. They agreed to set up a committee made up of the representatives of the participating political forces. The committee will be entrusted with following up the implementation of the recommendations and resolutions issued by the meeting, including the establishment of the Iraqi national nucleus and the groups that emanate from it.

The statement indicates that another expanded meeting will be held by the opposition political trends and forces and effective independent organizations and personalities. The statement does not specify the date of the meeting. The statement indicates that the participants value Syria's steadfast positions in the face of global Zionism and the political pressures aimed at containing the region and controlling the destinies of its peoples.

Iraq: Sources Deny 'Secret Decisions' Made in Damascus Meeting

JN0804112096 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic
8 Apr 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi sources, who participated in the expanded meeting of the Iraqi opposition factions

in Damascus last week, denied that the conference made secret decisions. The sources added that the announcement of such decisions is an attempt to hide the failure of the expanded conference in coming up with results that would bypass the well-known and long-standing stands of the Iraqi opposition factions.

The sources noted that the conference entrenched the differences between the factions who participated in the conference and the factions who did not participate. New differences emerged even among the factions who attended and participated in the conference, particularly regarding the confederation plan and the stand on the siege on Iraq.

The sources said, however, that the participation of Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, the prominent Iraqi opposition leader who is based in Iran, and the well-known Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani gave the conference significant political and media momentum despite the fact that it did not succeed in bringing closer the different viewpoints of the participants.

Although Baqir al-Hakim stressed the right of all Iraqi opposition factions to attend the conference to contribute to formulating the future of Iraq, other Shiite factions exerted tremendous pressure on the national and Kurdish parties to prevent the participation of the Communist Party and the patriotic factions.

Israel: Tension in North; Residents Told To Enter Shelters*TA0804191596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1900 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] There is tension along the northern border. The residents living in the border settlements were told to enter their shelters.

Our correspondents report that this evening explosions were heard in the village of Bra'shit in south Lebanon's western sector. Hizballah Radio reported that a Lebanese boy was killed and several others were wounded as a result of the explosion of bombs prepared by Israel. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman reports that Israel has not carried out any activities, including the activity being attributed to it. Assuming that this report is media preparation for a katyusha attack against our northern settlements, the IDF is doing everything necessary to defend the Galilee and preserves the right to react in whatever way it deems appropriate.

Israel: No Casualties Reported as Katyushas Hit Galilee*TA0904043196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
0424 GMT 9 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Our correspondent in the north Ilan Ro'e is on the phone:

[Ro'e] Yes, and I am here with a report that a round of katyusha rockets landed in the Galilee panhandle some two minutes ago. We still have no reports on casualties or any damage caused, and we are heading in that direction. We will update you later.

[At 0426 GMT Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew broadcasts a report by Moti 'Eden adding that another round of katyushas hit Western Galilee; there were no reports on casualties.]

Israel: 6 Injured by 3 Rounds of Katyushas in Galilee*TA0904051596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
0500 GMT 9 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the past hour, several katyusha rockets were fired at Qiryat Shemona and the western Galilee. In Qiryat Shemona, six people were wounded and a building was damaged by a direct hit. One woman suffered moderate wounds, and the other five were slightly wounded. Several other persons are suffering from shock. [passage omitted]

The Galilee Panhandle was hit by two rounds of katyushas, one shortly after 0700 [0400 GMT] and the other some 20 minutes later. The western Galilee came under a single katyusha volley, and there are no reports

of casualties there. Our correspondents in the north add that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has started firing back at terrorist targets in south Lebanon.

Our correspondent Gil Litman reports that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is being updated on the situation in the north.

Israel: Commander—South Lebanon Residents 'Will Suffer Badly'*TA0904081996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
0800 GMT 9 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or said this morning that he believes the rules of the game in south Lebanon will change. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will take measures to attain longer periods of calm and, if this fails, the residents of Lebanon north of the security zone will also not live in peace.

Speaking in Qiryat Shemona after the attack, Major General 'Amiram Levin, commander of the Northern Command, said that Hizballah will not be allowed to keep doing what it has been doing, and that the residents of south Lebanon who live under its rule will suffer badly. We will find a way to act and fast, Gen. Levin said. Answering a question, he noted that a Lebanese citizen was killed and several others wounded in Bra'shit yesterday when children were playing with an old mine.

Israel: All Planes Return After Raid in South Lebanon*TA0904091696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
0900 GMT 9 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal toured Qiryat Shemona this morning. The city residents received him in great anger. Our correspondent Ilan Ro'e reports that the minister tried to talk to the demonstrators, but they would not let him speak and he was forced to leave. Speaking to correspondents later, Shahal said that the government must react against Hizballah.

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman confirmed that this morning Air Force planes raided terrorist targets near Khirbat Silm in south Lebanon. All our planes returned safely to base.

Israel: Retaliation for Katyushas Without Contact With Washington*TA0904104196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
1005 GMT 9 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The government views this morning's katyusha volleys differently from the previ-

ous attack on Passover eve, our correspondent Gil Litman reports:

[Litman] Unlike during the hours after the katyusha firing last week, this time no transatlantic phone calls were held between the prime minister and the foreign minister and U.S. Administration officials. Political sources pointed out to me the differences between the two shooting incidents: Last time, Israel explained, through U.S. and other mediators, that the killing of the two Lebanese citizens was a mistake. The message was delivered to the Syrians, who passed it on to Hizballah, which was what probably kept the holidays quiet, until this morning.

This time, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman denied any contact between the IDF and the explosion that caused the death of a Lebanese youth yesterday. Also, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the incident last week caused no damage and no casualties; this time there are casualties, and several buildings in the northern settlements were badly damaged.

The problem is not how the IDF would retaliate, the political sources told me. Our army can certainly strike at Hizballah and its aides. The problem is what would happen next, the possible escalation that might follow. We know where we start, but it is hard to tell where and when the chain of reactions will end. [passage omitted]

Israel: Peres To Sign Defense Agreement With U.S.
TA0904103196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
9 Apr 96 p A1

[Report by if Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel and the United States are working on a comprehensive cooperation agreement concerning defense against surface-to-surface missiles and the war against the proliferation of nonconventional weapons. The agreement will be signed during Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' visit to Washington at the end of the month.

The agreement comes against the backdrop of growing concern about the efforts of Iran, Iraq, and Libya to attain missiles and nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. According to the emerging proposal, the two countries would set up joint forums to coordinate the war on missiles and nonconventional weapons. They would exchange intelligence data and cooperate in the development of surface-to-surface missile interceptors and ways and means to curb efforts to produce nonconventional weapons.

Over the weekend Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri and Quti Mor, director of the ministry's foreign affairs department, will hold a series of talks

with administration officials in Washington who will present their draft for an agreement.

During his visit to the United States, Peres will confer with Defense Secretary William Perry. It had initially been planned that the two would sign an agreement to continue the joint development of the Israeli Homa antimissile system, which includes the Arrow antiballistic missile. According to the agreement signed on the working level a few weeks ago, the two countries would invest \$500 million over the next five years in the development of a defense system.

In the deliberations in anticipation of Peres' visit, however, it was proposed to expand the agreement so that it not only focuses on cooperation in research and development of a defense against missiles, but extend to political and operational areas. 'Ivri spoke about the need for a comprehensive concept of this defense in a meeting with NATO defense ministry directors a few weeks ago. The meeting was attended by U.S. officials, who got the impression that Israel could make a contribution in this area.

In his visit to Washington this week 'Ivri will discuss other issues: the future of Nautilus, the project for the development of a laser-based katyusha interceptor; Israel's request to take part in U.S. bids for the launch of military satellites; and thwarting the sale of spy satellites and high-resolution satellite photographs to Arab countries.

An agreement to cooperate in the war on terror declared by U.S. President Bill Clinton during his visit to Israel last month will also be signed during Peres' visit, but no decision has yet been made on the level of the signatories. A joint statement will be issued at the end of the Clinton-Peres meeting announcing the launch of negotiations to raise the level of relations between the United States and Israel. A draft of the statement prepared by Israel notes that the sides will examine the establishment of a defense pact and will aim to sign a new security agreement by September.

The draft has been sent to Washington, and Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich has been holding contacts with administration officials to finalize its specifics.

Israel: Peres on Terror, Syria, Iran, Elections
TA0904081696 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST
in English 9 Apr 96 p 7

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by David Makovsky "this week"; place not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Makovsky] Given your declaration that there will be a referendum on final-status

talks with the Palestinians, and another referendum on the conclusion of negotiations with the Syrians, what exactly will the forthcoming election decide?

[Peres] I don't know any party platform that has been realized. A party platform (represents) negotiations with ourselves, and then we are extremely generous to ourselves. When it comes down to earth, it is useless. (In the 1977 Likud platform), Begin said he would keep Sinai; nothing is left from the Sinai. In the same Likud platform there was nothing about autonomy.

When we came up with "Gaza and Jericho First" or Oslo B, there was nothing like it (in the 1992 Labor platform). So people should not be worried. I am coming to the people and saying: Give me a mandate to negotiate permanent agreements. Clearly, I don't want to divide the people.

[Makovsky] If platforms are useless, why bother with them?

[Peres] We have to have principles. For example, we should keep Jerusalem united. The Jordan (River) will be the defense line....

[Makovsky] What does "defense line" mean? That the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will retain an armed presence there, or that no foreign army should cross it?

[Peres] It means no foreign army should be on the (west) side of the Jordan.

We shall not return to the '67 frontiers and there will be a referendum.

[Makovsky] Do you think that if the Likud is elected, it will — either by design or otherwise — return to Gaza or the West Bank cities?

[Peres] The point is that the Likud, because of the composition of its parties — two formal factions, Tzomet and Gesher, and an informal faction of (the settlement movement) YESHA' — will have to renew the settlement policy in the West Bank. This in my judgment will mean the end of peace and the end of a hope for peace. I have said it many times; I am saying it again. From eggs you can make omelets, but from omelets you cannot make eggs. They are going to "omelet" the whole West Bank beyond repair. And then we shall become a binational state.

The Likud sees in the autonomy a permanent solution, and we see in the autonomy a step towards a permanent solution.

[Makovsky] You used to say: "We will fight terrorists as if there is no peace, and we will go ahead with peace as if there is no terror." Now it seems that you have changed this thinking, as you are now making further

steps in the peace process conditional on the fighting against terror. In fact, you are not going ahead with a pullback from Hebron until Muhammad Dayf and other Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] fugitives are arrested.

[Peres] I intend to realize all our promises. But I cannot separate dates and events. We have demanded from the Palestinian Authority [PA] that it take the necessary measures against Hamas. Only now are they beginning to take them, and I believe they will continue. Hebron is basically a Hamas city, and I want to make sure that they are not handing it over to Hamas. That is legitimate and legal. It is my responsibility and I shall do it.

[Makovsky] Do you expect Hebron to be transferred before the elections?

[Peres] I don't want to commit myself.

[Makovsky] Did Yasir 'Arafat mislead Israel into thinking that Hamas would be a peaceful opposition party which he could co-opt, to avoid an Algeria-like civil-war situation?

[Peres] I don't care about his political structure, I don't want to mix in. We insist that he will fight Hamas not because it is a danger to Israel alone — but because it is a danger to him and his authority, and to him being a (peace) partner.

[Makovsky] Denials notwithstanding, reports persist about a speech in Stockholm in which 'Arafat predicted Israel's demise. And he called bomb-maker Yahya 'Ayyash a martyr. Furthermore, 'Arafat has not given any interviews to Israeli journalists since his arrival two years ago.

[Peres] I am judging by deeds, and even his speeches have undergone a change. Let's face it — they are not what they used to be.

[Makovsky] You have said "It does not matter what ('Arafat) says. Intentions are what is important; reality is more important." Is that still your view?

[Peres] Yes, sure.

[Makovsky] If you become convinced that 'Arafat is not serious in confronting Hamas, don't you think the public deserves a sense of what you will do, if elected, in the event that the peace process unravels?

[Peres] I don't want to commit myself unnecessarily — it does not depend upon a person. We are in a new age. Nobody can turn his back on history. It is nonsense. We are in a transitional period. The old Middle East has not yet disappeared completely and the new Middle East has not fully arrived. We are in the middle of it, so

we still suffer from the past, and we still cannot see the fruits of the future. It is a transition. It does not depend upon any person, because there is no hope for wars and winning wars. If you want to be strong and rich, grow economically, don't grow militarily.

People say (to leaders): "You go to make wars, occasionally for your own prestige. What about us? Our stomachs are empty, our children are ignorant. We are losing the competition in the world." In the world, at the times of competition, you have to compete, you cannot fight. There are rules and regulations and that's stronger than everything that one can say. A person can postpone and deviate. But the march of time is like the march of a river. The fish can hardly change that.

[Makovsky] Until the closure of the territories 'Arafat did not do what he is doing today against Hamas. This suggests to some people that 'Arafat only does the right thing when he is under massive pressure. Do you agree?

[Peres] He is beginning to understand, to reach the conclusion that Hamas wants to topple (the Palestinian Authority).

[Makovsky] How does the Israeli public know that someone caught by the PA today won't be released tomorrow?

[Peres] The best guarantee is to clarify that this is in 'Arafat's interest. I think the Palestinian Authority is itself surprised by the depth of the Hamas underground, by the viciousness of their policies.

[Makovsky] Israel has been blowing up homes and deporting Palestinians now for over 25 years but it has not seemed to serve as a deterrent. Why should Israel pursue this policy?

[Peres] We have learned from terrorists who were supposed to commit suicide acts; they said that the only thing that would prevent them is if their families would be affected. So we are warning people: If you should commit suicide, (you can't) be sure your home will remain intact, and don't be sure that all the members of your family will remain here. That's the only preventive matter we have learned from investigating this.

[Makovsky] Do you still expect to deport some people?

[Peres] If there will be a need for it, yes.

[Makovsky] What would be Israel's minimal conditions regarding the PLO changing its covenant?

[Peres] To annul those articles that call for the destruction of Israel.

[Makovsky] What if it mentions Palestinian aspirations for Jerusalem or the right of return?

[Peres] You asked me what is the minimum — I said the minimum.

[Makovsky] You think it will be changed before the elections?

[Peres] They are committed.

[Makovsky] You now speak in terms of separation of Jews and Palestinians. In the past, you said it was a bad idea. What led you to change your mind?

[Peres] I distinguish between an economic (and political) separation, which I was always against and I am still against. But otherwise, if the alternative is a binational state, I will support each nation having its own entity. Clearly. That is the meaning of separation. Not to make an omelet.

[Makovsky] But the Shahal Commission's recommendations for separation last year were ignored.

[Peres] (There are differences.) The fence will only be 12 km, not the whole line. There will be other electronic means. There will be zones of security, necessary for security arrangements.

[Makovsky] Should the separation reflect Israel's envisioned territorial partition of the West Bank?

[Peres] No, this will be the result of negotiations.

[Makovsky] You are opposed to moving any settlements in any final-status agreement?

[Peres] I don't think we have to dismantle settlements, I don't think we have to add settlements. That is my position. No adding and no dismantling.

[Makovsky] And what about the idea of settlement blocs as a part of a final arrangement?

[Peres] When you negotiate, there are many suggestions, and I don't have to either exclude or monopolize one suggestion. Every suggestion that got publicity before time is a dead suggestion. It is like opening a film in daylight.

[Makovsky] You repeatedly say that a Palestinian confederation with Jordan is far preferable to a Palestinian state. Can you elaborate on what you mean by confederation?

[Peres] I mean first of all that this will enable us to secure the demilitarization of all the territories (from which Israel withdraws) in the future. There would be one army — the Jordanian-Palestinian army. It also means preventing a conflict between the Jordanians and the Palestinians.

[Makovsky] It would not preclude a border inside the West Bank.

[Peres] It does not preclude, it does not monopolize.

[Makovsky] It seems that Israel's relations with Jordan and the Palestinians are better than their relations with each other. Is this not a dangerous situation?

[Peres] No. Wherever you can improve you improve. Eventually we shall have to live together in a triangle. Otherwise every angle will need the other one. And we have to arrange that the three angles will be composed in a complementary manner.

[Makovsky] Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Yosi Beilin and 'Arafat deputy Mahmud 'Abbas (Abu-Mazin) were working on a final status outline which people involved in the negotiations say would enable about 100,000 settlers to remain under Israeli sovereignty. What do you think about this?

[Peres] I was totally unaware and totally unsupportive. I am unaware an agreement exists.

[Makovsky] The revolutionary shift at Oslo was supposed to be accompanied by economic developments. What happened to the multilaterals for economic development? What happened to the regional development bank? What happened to the Jordan Rift Valley Project with Jordan? What happened to industrial parks, providing employment for the Palestinians in Gaza? How can Israel now go to Europe and ask for money for other projects when all these ideas have yet to be implemented?

[Peres] The regional bank is being realized. Under our instruction people were nominated and selected. There is no longer any problem. It will be in Cairo, but it takes time. On the Jordan Rift Valley and other issues, there are feasibility studies. It takes time. Planning takes time as well. But it is on the planning board and it will be realized — the same (applies to) the industrial park.

[Makovsky] Perhaps one of the main conclusions of the Shamgar Commission is that the General Security Service needs greater supervision than one man, the prime minister, has time to provide? Perhaps what is needed is either greater parliamentary supervision or an interministerial panel?

[Peres] I appointed an excellent man as its head (Maj.-Gen. 'Ami Ayalon). I trust him completely and fully. When it comes to secrets, whenever you have a committee, you are not sure that the secrets will remain secrets.

[Makovsky] To what extent do you feel that peace is too great a price for Syria because liberalization could bring about al-Asad's downfall?

[Peres] I think nobody is left with a choice. All the non-liberal forces cannot feed the nation. You need

democracy for the economy, you need democracy for peace.

[Makovsky] Visiting Damascus one is struck by the increasing number of satellite dishes on the rooftops.

[Peres] Every dish is a hope.

[Makovsky] Do you see this maybe as analogous to Eastern Europe in the early '80s when it is said that television presaged the end of the Cold War because Eastern Europeans became more aware of what people in the West had and what they lacked?

[Peres] In Europe, the silver curtain of television was stronger than the Iron Curtain.... The question I ask everyone (in the Middle East) is: If the Far East can change itself, why can't we? Take Thailand, take Indonesia, and Korea.

[Makovsky] I heard that in a meeting you had in Buenos Aires with Argentine President Menem (who is of Syrian extraction and who visited Syria), he said al-Asad was not as shrewd as people give him credit for and that he has brought little to his people.

[Peres] This is right.

[Makovsky] The Egyptians have made their separate peace with Israel. The Palestinians have moved ahead without Syria by going to Oslo. The Jordanians have made their own peace with Israel, and now the Gulf States and some North African Arab states are also moving ahead with Israel without him. What does he have to show?

[Peres] You can write it.

[Makovsky] You don't want to comment?

[Peres] No. Why should I comment if I have to negotiate with him?

[Makovsky] Would you like to see a deal with Syria by November, when Secretary of State Warren Christopher is, by his own admission, due to retire?

[Peres] If possible, yes.

[Makovsky] Are you optimistic, even though talks have essentially stopped for now?

[Peres] I sent a message with the Americans to al-Asad. Al-Asad says he wants peace in '96. I said if we want a deal in '96, we have to fly high and fast, not low and slow. This means that we have to negotiate differently. We have to raise the level of negotiations to the top leadership of the countries.... I got a reply (from al-Asad via the Americans, saying): "Yes, we can meet but I can't say the date." ...I want to see what is the pace of his movement.

[Makovsky] Do you preclude the June 4, 1967, borders with the Syrians?

[Peres] Yes, but I don't want to conduct negotiations this way.

[Makovsky] Yitzhaq Rabin said in the last interview before his tragic death: Until there's a peace deal with Syria Israeli soldiers will continue to be killed in southern Lebanon. Do you agree with that?

[Peres] I don't know.

[Makovsky] Maybe there's a need for a unilateral withdrawal from the security zone?

[Peres] It is impossible. It will worsen the situation. In Lebanon you have two forces, one force holds the microphone — that's the government; the other force holds the rifle — this is the Hizballah. So what is the sense of making an agreement with the microphone?

[Makovsky] So you think if Israel were to withdraw, there would be renewed infiltrations into Israel?

[Peres] Yes.

[Makovsky] Do you think Iran is planning terror attacks to unseat you?

[Peres] Not to unseat me as a person. But they want to unseat a government of peace because they want to unseat peace.

[Makovsky] Can you divulge one example?

[Peres] No.

[Makovsky] Has the U.S. strategy of dual containment of Iran failed because Europeans have not truly joined in?

[Peres] There is still an effort, not an achievement. The Americans are trying very seriously to do so.... I saw that some European countries have now extended credit to Iran, which is a scandal.

[Makovsky] Basically European policy toward Iran is, in your view, motivated solely by money?

[Peres] No, it's not just money, but rather a refusal to face critical situations and (instead) taking a more accommodating look at things.

[Makovsky] According to reports, you went to Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef and said SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] voters shouldn't vote in the direct election of the prime minister. It seems that the Labor Party position is to discourage haredim [ultra-Orthodox Jews] while encouraging Israeli Arabs to vote in this election. Is it true? If so, what kind of message does this send in a democratic sense?

[Peres] First, I never said it. I did not come to negotiate. I came to congratulate him on Passover and that's it. Secondly, the religious have to decide if they are on the side of peace or not. We stand for peace and security. And the same goes for the Arabs. They have to decide, they are part and parcel of the Israeli citizenship. (Just as I) wouldn't discriminate against anyone because they are religious, I would not discriminate against anyone because he is an Arab. We call on the whole population to participate in the election.

[Makovsky] Do you rule out a national unity government with the Likud after the election?

[Peres] If the Likud will accept our program, why not? The problem is not the government, the problem is the program. I think I am the best-positioned person in this country to serve the young generation, because what I am carrying is a message, not an ambition. This is my deep conviction. I think there is a great opportunity to save this country from unnecessary wars. This is what I am doing. The rest is secondary.

[Makovsky] You said recently that "Israelis need more Yiddishkeit and Diaspora Jews need more Hebrew." Do you want to enrich the Jewish curriculum in Israeli schools? What will be the nature of a new partnership between Israel and the Diaspora in a post-peace Israel?

[Peres] First, we have to set a new agenda for the coming 50 to 100 years of Jewish life. The first agenda, which will reach its 100th anniversary next year, is completely fulfilled, better than Herzl ever dreamed. Now we need a new dream. The new dream is once we have established our territorial concentration, we have to build our spiritual center. On the agenda will be to gather whatever is Jewish — historically, universally, and intellectually — and bring it to Israel. So the agenda will be to build a spiritual center for a Jewish future in Jerusalem, in Israel.

Second, if until now Israel was an answer to Jewish tragedies and the Holocaust, Israel must become an attraction for inviting the Jewish youth to live here or with us wherever they are. For that reason, the main answer to the question of "Who is a Jew?" is not if your parents were Jewish, but if your children will be Jewish. For that reason, education will become the major instrument of the relations between the Diaspora and us.

We have to attract not just material support, but Jewish intellectual talents wherever they are. Israel went against the tide and succeeded for the sole reason that we are a believing nation, because our moral fiber exceeded our imperial strategies, so to speak. This is what we have to do for the future.

Israel: Statistics Bureau Puts Number of Settlers at 133,500

TA0804134896 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
8 Apr 96 p A10

[Report by Sami Sokol]

[FBIS Translated Text] Figures published this week by the Central Bureau of Statistics indicate that the number of settlers actually living in the territories is 133,500: 128,300 live in the West Bank and 5,200 in the Gaza Strip.

The figures are based on the national census that was conducted at the end of October 1995. They are lower than those published by the Interior Ministry's population registrar which put the number of settlers in the territories at 147,000.

Mosi Raz, the political secretary of Peace Now, said the data reflects the phenomenon that growing numbers of settlers are migrating back inside the Green Line while maintaining ownership of their house in the territories. This, so they can continue to benefit from income tax incentives and also receive compensation when Israel completes its withdrawal from the territories.

Aharon Domb, the spokesman for the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, rejected Peace Now's analysis of the data. Domb asserted that the data in his possession, which he was about to publish, indicates an continuing rise in the number of settlers in the territories.

Jordan: Prime Minister, Others Reportedly on Iraqi Hit List

JN0904092196 Al-Dammam AL-YAWM in Arabic
6 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by Muhammad al-Majali in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Security sources in Amman said that ranking Jordanian officials are on a hit list of those whom the Iraqi intelligence service is planning to assassinate in revenge against the Jordanian Government.

The security sources told AL-YAWM that Royal Court Chief 'Awn al-Khasawinah and Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti are among those on the assassination list. The security sources said all Iraqis in Jordan, without exception, are under watch.

The Jordanian Government recently expelled Lieutenant Colonel Husayn Faraj, assistant to the cultural attache at the Iraqi Embassy who was using his post as a cover. Faraj is an expert in training intelligence elements on assassination and criminal activities.

Iraqi opposition sources confirmed these reports in statements to AL-YAWM. These sources said the members of the Iraqi network in Amman are working at companies owned by 'Udayy Saddam Husayn and registered under false names. The hit lists also include the names of Iraqi opposition members in Jordan who have important information about Iraqi weapons and the whereabouts of Kuwaiti prisoners in Iraq.

The opposition sources said Iraq's intelligence network had previously been run from the Iraqi Embassy, but this task was recently shifted to Jordanian universities. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Defector Reportedly Iraqi 'Agent,' Asked To Leave Jordan

JN0904123296 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic
10 Apr 96 p 7

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Well-informed sources have disclosed that General al-Khazraji, former Iraqi chief of staff, is a top Iraqi "agent." The sources added that al-Khazraji was sent as a personal envoy of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn to spy on Jordan and to perform a mission that our sources did not explain. How was this discovery made?

It appears that al-Khazraji's departure from Iraq was a carefully implemented Iraqi maneuver. Jordanian security services, in cooperation with U.S. intelligence, discovered the game at the last minute. It also appears that the Jordanian Government came very close to granting al-Khazraji political asylum in Jordan immediately after

he defected from Iraq. But last-minute advice from U.S. security to wait prompted Jordan to halt the decision.

Jordanian Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that al-Khazraji was allowed to visit Jordan at his own request. He said: The government has not decided to grant him political asylum, and he has not asked for it.

The discovery of the prominent Iraqi agent explains the nature of the measures that have been taken. Al-Khazraji was given two weeks to leave Jordan, and the U.S. Embassy in Amman refused to give him a visa to the visit the United States. Al-Khazraji was asked to pack up and to leave Jordan for any place he chooses. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Al-Mu'ashshir—Government Not Part of Israeli-Palestinian Talks

JN0904092896 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
9 Apr 96 pp 1, 20

[Report by Nivin 'Abd-al-Hadi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman—Information Minister Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said that the U.S. planes that will take part in the joint Jordanian-U.S. maneuvers will arrive on 12 April. He added that the details of the maneuvers will be announced at a news conference by Jordanian and American political and military officials on 13 April. The minister said that there are absolutely no American planes in Jordan, noting that an American team arrived in Jordan to receive the planes on 5 April.

Al-Mu'ashshir was speaking at his weekly meeting with journalists at the Marriott Hotel yesterday. [passage omitted]

The minister reviewed the latest developments in Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations. He said: We want to restore these relations to their previous level. The Kuwaiti Government's response has been quite favorable. We feel that relations are heading in the right direction, but we all know that the restoration of relations depends on conditions inside Kuwait. We are waiting until the conditions become right for the Kuwaitis to reinstate relations. At any rate, we are satisfied with the progress of relations, which have not yet reached the level of diplomatic exchange.

Answering a question about rumors that the Jordanian option will be implemented as a substitute for a Palestinian state, al-Mu'ashshir said: The Jordanian Army will not enter the West Bank. Our position is clear: We will not be party to the Palestinian-Israeli final-status negotiations. We will not be a vehicle for solutions

that are unsatisfactory to the Palestinian people. Our demands are the same as those of the Palestinians. We strongly support the efforts of the Palestinian people and their National Authority to conclude an agreement that is satisfactory to the people. Any other ideas are either unrealistic or promoted by certain people or parties that seek a solution that does not serve the public interest. Jordan will not do anything at the expense of the Palestinians and will not be a negotiating party on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This is entirely a Palestinian affair.

Regarding Jordanian-Israeli relations and their future in light of the upcoming Israeli elections, al-Mu'ashshir said: We do not have any problem with the Likud party, which is no longer advocating the Jordanian option as a substitute for a Palestinian state. As its officials said, the majority of the Likud Party voted for the peace treaty, which included a definition of borders and explicitly stipulated that no state will conduct a compulsory and collective transfer of people to the other country. Therefore, there will be no collective transfer. The slackening of the peace process and the peaceful atmosphere is a natural thing, given that not all Arab parties reached peace agreements with Israel. This will reflect negatively on the climate of peace in the region.

With respect to the increasing arrival of Iraqi opposition figures in Jordan, he said: The Iraqi opposition is an internal Iraqi matter. We are not competing with any party to attract opposition members to Jordan. The Jordanian position has been clear. Jordan was attacked because it was said that the country supports a certain idea or backs the Iraqi opposition. However, nobody has commented on the recent Iraqi opposition conference, which was held in Damascus and stressed the importance of federation in Iraq. On the contrary, it was described as a national plan. What concerns us is the Jordanian position, what is said about it, and the double-standard applied against Jordan. Anything beyond that is an Iraqi affair, and we have nothing to do with it. Wafiq al-Samara'i, former chief of Iraqi intelligence, made his decision independently and not at our request. He asked to enter Jordan, and we agreed to his request.

Jordan: Al-Mu'ashshir on U.S. Military Exercises, Iraqi Opposition

JN0904071496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English
9 Apr 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—American jetfighters expected to take part in joint exercises with the Jordanian Royal Air Force are expected to start arriving here Friday [12 April], Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said Monday.

Thirty-four U.S. Air Force planes will take part in the exercises, code-named "Eager Tiger," which are part of regular joint war-games staged by the two countries. Eighteen of the planes will be F-16s, 12 will be F-15s and four will be KC-135 tanker jets.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir did not give any details of the training exercises, expected to begin around April 12, but said a joint Jordanian-American conference will be held to announce all details.

Jordan is expected to receive 16 F-16 planes from the U.S., and the exercises this month will afford Jordanian pilots to have field training on the aircraft, officials have said earlier.

Some of the American planes will also fly surveillance flights over Iraq while they are in Jordan, but no Jordanian will take part in those flights, which are part of the enforcement of a United Nations Security Council resolution, issued after Iraq moved and then withdrew a massive military force towards its border with Kuwait in October 1994.

The U.S. conducts surveillance flights over southern Iraq with planes based on aircraft carriers in the Gulf, and the Jordan-based flights would last for two months when American warships will be away from their usual positions in the Gulf.

Western diplomatic sources quoted by REUTERS said the U.S. jets will not fly directly to south Iraq from Jordan but will use Saudi Arabia to enter Iraqi airspace.

Advance units of American soldiers are already in Jordan to prepare for the joint exercises, which are expected to involve roughly 1,100 service personnel from the two sides.

On another issue, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir rejected the notion that there was "competition" between Jordan and Syria for influence in Iraq and noted that a meeting of Iraqi exile groups in Damascus last week had come up with the ideas that were backed by Jordan.

"There is no competition at all between us," the minister said. "Jordan's position is clear and we have made it clear in our statements."

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir referred to Jordan's support for the idea of a federation among the three major communities in Iraq—Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds—if that would be the solution to the country's problems. He said that when Jordan mentions the idea "it is described as conspiracy against Iraq," but that as far as the Kingdom was concerned "it is an Iraqi affair, whether a federation or any other formula that the Iraqi people decide upon."

"Jordan supported the idea of hosting a conference of Iraqi groups," said the minister. "There was one in Damascus, which came out with the same ideas; one of them was that of a federation in Iraq," he noted, adding that he "could not understand the double standard when it comes to dealing with Jordan."

On a related issue, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said Wafiq al-Samarra'i, a former chief of Iraqi military intelligence who defected from his country in 1994, had come to Jordan from Syria upon his wish. Jordan did not invite him but granted him permission to stay in the Kingdom in response to his request, Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said, adding that he did not know how long Gen. al-Samarra'i would stay here.

General al-Samarra'i was the second ranking Iraqi officer given permission to stay in Amman in less than a month. Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said he did not expect the affair to have any negative bearing on Jordanian-Syrian relations.

Jordan: Sprint Jordan Granted First Internet License

JN0904070096 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 1900 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Ministry of Post and Communications today granted Sprint Jordan the first

official license to hook up with the worldwide Internet computer service. Internet is the biggest information bank in the world and has around 45 million users. Sprint Jordan users can now hook up their computer phones with the Internet and get access to libraries, banks, and universities worldwide.

Minister of Post and Telecommunications Jamal al-Sarayirah said that the government has, since the Amman economic summit, adopted the policy of opening up the area of communications to the private sector. Jamal al-Sarayirah added that the prime minister agreed to grant three other licenses for public phones and three phone mobile radios.

The licenses will be granted to specialized companies based on tenders. The ministry has laid one condition down, and that is, that 40 percent of the shares of these companies be issued to the public sector.

Lebanon: Hizballah Bomb Blast Reported in South

NC0804194396 *Paris AFP in English*
1924 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tyre, Lebanon, April 8 (AFP) — A bomb packed with three charges went off in south Lebanon late Monday [8 April], killing a teenager and wounding two children and a man, police said.

The Iranian-backed Hizballah blamed Israel for the attack, which killed a 16-year-old and wounded two children aged five and eight as well as a man of 25.

According to police, the bomb made up of three charges connected by electric wires had been placed on a road north of Bra'shit, a village next to the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in southern Lebanon.

The type of bomb was one commonly used by the Israeli army and its proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), police said. Hizballah accused the SLA of setting of the bomb during an incursion outside of Israel's self-declared "security zone".

UN peacekeeping forces confirmed one person had been killed in an explosion and two wounded, adding that an inquiry had been opened to investigate the causes of the blast.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces deployed along the border with Lebanon were placed on a state of alert Monday and residents in the area advised to sleep in the bomb shelters, Israeli military officials said. But an army spokesman denied any involvement in the explosion and warned Israel would "reply to any attack."

Ten days ago, Hizballah guerrillas fired rockets into northern Israel after a civilian was killed in an Israeli shelling of a Lebanese village. Hizballah has vowed to attack Israel if any Lebanese civilians are killed.

Lebanon: Beirut Radio Accuses Israel of Planting Bomb

NC0804202596 *Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic*
2000 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An explosion that the Israeli forces planted on a secondary road leading to the Israeli post in Bra'shit in the central sector went off at 1900 today with a group of boys and children. The blast killed Mazin 'Imad Farhat, aged 14, and wounded three others — Ibrahim 'Imad Farhat, 3, Muhammad Husayn 'Ubayd, 5, and 'Ali Kamal al-Sha'ir, 20. They have been taken to the Tibnin Hospital.

Lebanon: Israeli Planes Raid Areas in South

NC0904054796 *Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic* 0537 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Zionist military aircraft are carrying out raids of liberated areas. The aircraft raided Wadi al-Qaysiyah between Majdal Silm and al-Sawwanah. The second raid was on an area between Majdal Silm and Khirbat Silm. The third raid was on the al-Mallulah area between Khirbat Silm and al-Jumayjimah.

Lebanon: Amal Claims Responsibility for Attacks on Lahdist Posts

NC0904060296 *Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic*
0430 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Youth Mazin 'Imad Farhat was killed and three people, two of them children, were hurt when an explosive charge planted by the Israeli occupation forces along the road leading to their post in Bra'shit went off. Afterward the Israeli army asked residents of the settlements along the Lebanese border to spend the night in shelters. This morning Amal announced that at 2200 on Monday [8 April] night one of its groups carried out a blitz attack on the Jabal al-Humayyid post using artillery rockets and machine guns. The attack destroyed the fortifications and watchtower. The Lahdist member inside the watchtower was killed.

We have live telephone contact with the news editors desk:

[Begin unidentified news editor recording] A short time ago REUTERS reported that Katyushas fell on northern Israel early this morning. Citing Israeli radio, it said rockets hit the Galilee panhandle. The agency gave no details. [end recording]

Elsewhere on the southern front, reports note that another group attacked the Rshaf post using machine guns and artillery fire, destroying the post's fortifications. Five Lahd men were hurt. A statement released by Amal said the artillery support unit shelled the two posts, scoring direct hits. The groups that carried out the operations returned to their bases safely.

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Statement on Attack on Northern Israel

NC0904063696 *Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic* 0530 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Three salvos of Katyushas fell this morning on the Zionist settlements in the north of occupied Palestine. The artillery shelling carried out by the Islamic Resistance came in response to the ugly

Zionist crime committed yesterday in Bra'shit in which one youth was killed and two children were wounded when an explosive charge was detonated by remote control.

The Islamic Resistance artillery attack wounded at least nine people among the settlers. This prompted the enemy army command to issue instructions to the settlers to stay in their shelters. Details and information are with Sa'id Darwish:

[Begin Darwish recording] The Islamic Resistance has issued a statement regarding its response to the Zionist crime. The statement said:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate: "But if ye revert (to your sins) we shall revert (to our punishments): And we have made hell a prison for those who reject all faith." [Koranic verse]

The Islamic Resistance has responded to the excesses committed by the Zionist occupation forces represented in their crimes that strike Lebanese civilians in the liberated areas and that recently killed off a whole family in the town of al-Ghanduriyah when the family car was booby-trapped. That day the Islamic Resistance reserved its right to respond to the attack. Then the occupation stepped up its aggression, extending all the way to striking civilians in the town of Yatar. Yesterday the enemy continued its sins by planting explosive devices targeting residents of Bra'shit along a road used by townspeople. The road falls under the supervision and control of the occupation forces located at the town's post. The explosive charges killed one child and wounded other children last night. In response to all this and in defense of our people's safety — a duty the Islamic Resistance has assumed to protect its people — at 0711 this morning the Islamic Resistance hit the settlements of Nahariyya and Qiryat Shemona in occupied northern Palestine with numerous Katyusha salvos. The Islamic Resistance warns the Zionist enemy that it will lie in wait for it every time its terrorist activities target the defenseless civilians, irrespective of the quality of their attacks. This is the end of the Islamic Resistance statement. Sa'id Darwish in the south for the Voice of the Oppressed. [end recording]

Lebanon: 6 Israeli 'Warplanes' Raid Southern Towns

NC0904083196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
0800 GMT 9 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At 0815 today six Israeli F-16 warplanes raided the outskirts of Majdal Silm, Khirbat Silm, al-Sawwanah, and al-Jumayjimah in the liberated western sector of the south. Three raiding airplanes fired six air-to-ground missiles but no casualties have

been reported. The Islamic Resistance clarified that this morning it fired Katyusha rockets at settlements in northern occupied Palestine in response to the excessive crimes of the Israeli occupation forces against civilians in the liberated areas. The rockets wounded 13 residents of the Israeli settlements. Latest reports from the south say cautious tension prevails in the area now. The Israeli air raid was accompanied by artillery shelling, which targeted, in particular, Khirbat Silm and al-Sultaniyah, wounding a citizen. The towns of Zibqin and Majdal Zun came under fire from the Israeli artillery at locations in Tayr Harfa. In the western and central sectors tension prevails following the Israeli raid on the outskirts of Tulin in the central sector. These raids were accompanied by artillery shelling. In their response to the massacre committed by the Israeli enemy in the town of Bra'shit, killing Mazin 'Imad Farhat and wounding two people, Lebanese Resistance regiments claimed responsibility for two attacks on the locations of Humayyid and Rshaf. The resistance spoke about losses among the ranks of the occupation army and Agents.

Lebanon: 6 Lebanese Families Kidnapped in Liberia

NC0804195996 Paris AFP in English
1939 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, April 8 (AFP) — Liberian fighters have kidnapped six Lebanese families during the worst fighting in four years in Monrovia, Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said Monday [8 April].

He told a press conference in Beirut that the families had been kidnapped by armed men loyal to Roosevelt Johnson, the ousted leader of the United Liberation Movement (ULIMO-J).

The Lebanese embassy in the Liberian capital had also been attacked three times, but the assailants had failed to break in.

Buwayz said he was in constant contact with the Lebanese charge d'affaires in Liberia Mansur al-Abdallah, but added it was "impossible" at the moment to evacuate some 1,200 Lebanese stranded in Monrovia.

On Sunday he asked the United States to evacuate Lebanese nationals by sea, and said Monday he was still in contact with Washington as well as the Nigerian head of the African peacekeeping force in Liberia, ECOMOG, and Ghana which is trying to reach a peaceful end to the fighting.

The Lebanese minister added that Nigerian planes had overflowed Monrovia late Monday and ECOMOG forces

had begun to deploy on the edge of the city which was witnessing its third day of fighting.

A 10-member U.S. military team was on alert Monday, awaiting orders to fly into Liberia to assess possible evacuation of U.S. nationals amid fighting in the capital, the Pentagon said.

The fighting erupted in Monrovia over the weekend when armed police attacked Johnson's residence. He is wanted for murder.

An estimated 2,000 Lebanese are said to have moved back to Liberia after thousands fled when civil war broke out in 1989. A peace accord was signed in August after 150,000 Liberians had died in the fighting.

Lebanon: Lebanese Leaders Hold Contacts on Monrovia

*NC0904060996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
0430 GMT 9 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Lebanese Charge d'Affaires in Monrovia Mansur al-'Abdallah has stated that Lebanese people in Monrovia are fine, but that General Roosevelt Johnson kidnapped seven Lebanese families as he retreated to his camp. Reports from Monrovia say the fighting has abated since the African peacekeeping forces reached the outskirts of the Liberian capital.

President al-Hirawi met Speaker Birri, who then met Prime Minister al-Hariri. Speaker Birri set up an op-

erations room in 'Ayn al-Tinah to stay in touch with the Ministries of Expatriate Affairs and Foreign Affairs. Following Speaker Birri's contacts, three ships and two cargo planes were secured. They are now at Abuja Airport in Nigeria and are ready to move to Monrovia. Contacts are being held to secure the safe transport of the Lebanese community members from the areas where they are besieged to the Liberian capital's port. Contacts are being held to release the kidnapped Lebanese. Reports say a Nigerian contingent is deploying in the area of the clashes on instructions from the Ghanaian president, who now chairs the African group.

Minister of Expatriate Affairs 'Ali al-Khalil, who set up an emergency office at the Ministry, said he has been informed that the African peacekeeping forces, particularly the Nigerian forces, are moving toward the Liberian capital. They are preparing themselves to hold direct contacts among the fighting factions. Negotiations have begun to protect the Lebanese hostages being held by Johnson and to speed up their release.

Minister al-Khalil has noted that the members of the community there are well. No one has been hurt. He demanded that the African peacekeeping forces intervene to stop the fighting. He expressed his ministry's and the State's readiness to do all they can to rescue the Lebanese expatriates and secure their material requirements should the need arise. [passage omitted]

Syria: Commentary—Peace Requires 'Uprooting' Causes of Conflict

JN0804165496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Although four-and-a-half years have passed since the Madrid conference, peace obviously has not yet found its way into the region. There are also no signs to indicate any possible breakthrough in the near future. The gate to peace, which was widely opened by the international legitimacy resolutions and the U.S. initiative, has been narrowed by Israel's ignorance of those resolutions and what the U.S. initiative calls for. Thus, this gate has become too narrow to allow peace into the region. This is despite all the efforts that have been made by Syria to keep that gate open before peace and what accompanies it in terms of security for the region, tranquility for its peoples, and opportunities for those peoples to employ their potential and exploit their resources in the fields of development, construction, and work to provide the requirements of a decent life and better future for them and coming generations.

Based on the above, it can be said that the future of peace in the region will continue to hinge on the extent of Israel's readiness to widely open the gate to allow peace to pass through. This requires a new mentality that can realize the dimensions of the true victory that lies in a peace that is based on justice and that can consequently realize that such a peace is the guarantee of security and stability. There can be no firmer security or stability than those achieved, maintained, and protected by an equitable, firm peace with no cracks in its structure and no gaps that could weaken it and make it liable to collapse.

Syria has reiterated and continues to reiterate that it is extremely interested in a genuine, comprehensive, and just peace. Motivated by this interest, Syria adheres to its stand which calls for uprooting the causes of the Arab-Israeli conflict and removing all the factors threatening security and stability in this extremely sensitive region of the world.

To remove the causes of conflict and the factors of explosion, the advocates of peace and those calling for creating a healthy atmosphere for coexistence among peoples should address the problem of the absence of peace rather than circumventing it and avoiding ways of dealing with it. Toward this end, they should use all available methods, including radical ones.

Undoubtedly, if one looks for peace, he cannot lose the way to it. The road to peace is the same; it has not changed and will not change. It is fully clear for those wishing to follow it. UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 and the U.S. land-for-peace initiative are the best guide to peace without facing setbacks or obstacles on the way.

Axiomatically, peace is impossible before Israel's withdrawal from the Golan and the occupied Lebanese territory, a withdrawal that does not leave any trace of aggression. However, as asserted by President Hafiz al-Asad, it is clear that the Israelis have so far not made up their minds with regard to peace. Moreover, it seems that they have not yet been convinced that it is impossible to establish peace as long as there is continuous aggression with continuous traces of it and that it is impossible to keep the occupied territory and have peace at the same time.

Syria has shown remarkable flexibility and given a genuine and just peace every chance of success. It confirmed by word and deed that it is ready to follow the path of peace and meet all its requirements. Syria believes in peace and that peace brings prosperity to it and those around it and to all mankind. Yet, Syria believes that the responsibility for peace is not exclusively its own. Syria's responsibility toward the liberation of its territory will, however, remain greater than any other responsibility.

Definitely, a peace that does not lead to the liberation of the territory and to the restoration of rights is nothing but a declaration of war, even though guns might appear to be silent.

Syria: MENA—Syria Protests Turkish-Israeli Military Agreement

NC0904080996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2200 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 8 Apr (MENA)—The Syrian Government has lodged a protest with the Turkish ambassador in Damascus over the agreement signed between Turkey and Israel opening Turkish airspace to Israeli aircraft. The Turkish ambassador was summoned today and informed of the Syrian protest.

Official Syrian sources have stated that this agreement represents a dangerous development in the political situation in the region and is a factor fomenting tension and instability.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Government Forms Delegation for Peace Talks With Taleban

*BK0904084696 Hong Kong AFP in English
0826 GMT 9 Apr 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, April 9 (AFP) — The Kabul government has formed a special delegation to hold peace talks with the Taleban militia besieging the Afghan capital, President Borhanoddin Rabbani told AFP on Tuesday [9 April].

The president revealed his plans to hold the first direct negotiations with the Islamic warriors just days after a special meeting of the movement's religious leaders dismissed any possibility of talks with the Kabul regime, which they regard as illegitimate.

But Rabbani, who has led the Afghan government for four years, rejected the decision as irrelevant, saying he would instead respond to an offer — sent last week through UN peace envoy Mahmoud Mestiri — by one of the Taleban's top political leaders for talks.

"Following the Taleban proposal conveyed by Ambassador Mestiri, we have nominated a delegation to hold talks and to visit with the Taleban," he said.

"If Mestiri succeeds (in convincing the Taleban to talk [word indistinct] if the Taleban can put together a delegation, this would be a very good thing," he said.

"We are ready for talks with the Taleban and those groups of the movement which support peace in Afghanistan."

Rabbani did not specify where any such unprecedented peace talks between the two warring factions would take place, but officials said privately that they would go ahead "as soon as possible" in the eastern city of Jalalabad.

"The timing of the talks depends on Mestiri's efforts with the Taleban," the president added.

The militiamen, who control about half of Afghanistan, have been surrounding Kabul on three major fronts for the last six months, vowing to topple Rabbani's beleaguered government.

Afghanistan: Taleban Group Bombs Capital of Ghowr Province

*LD0804144996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto
to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] The capital of Ghowr Province, which is controlled by the Kabul administration forces, has been bombed by the Taleban air force.

According to news agency reports, yesterday the town of Cheghcharan was bombed by the Taleban air force. The report says that the exact number of casualties and fatalities caused by the bombing is not known.

Mawlawi Ehsanollah Ehsan, a Taleban spokesman, said the Kabul administration forces based in the town had made preparations for a big offensive against the Taleban. The Kabul administration was transporting military equipment to the town. He added that the Kabul administration's plane was able to [words indistinct] but the arms and ammunition it had taken to the province were destroyed as a result of the bombardment.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Chief Election Commissioner Resigns

*BK0604161696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network
in English 1600 GMT 6 Apr 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Justice A.K.M. Sadeque today resigned from the post of chief election commissioner. His resignation letter has been accepted.

Bangladesh: President Appoints New Election Commission Officials

*BK0804163396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network
in English 1600 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The president has appointed Mr. Mohammad Abu Hena as the chief election commissioner of Bangladesh. Before this appointment, Mr. Hena, was a member of the planning commission. The government has also appointed Mr. Mohammad Faizur Razzak, secretary of power, energy and mineral resources, as secretary of the Election Commission Secretariat. President Abdur Rahman Biswas made the appointments today.

Bangladesh: Editorial Laments Indian Trade Barriers

*BK0804125096 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English
4 Apr 96 p 4*

[Editorial: "Removing Tariff Barrier"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It is quite assuring to know that Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee favours withdrawal of tariff and non-tariff barriers on goods imported from Bangladesh. The issue deserved to be treated much earlier in the light of the widening trade gap between India and Bangladesh. So far Bangladesh has unsuccessfully pleaded for wide access of its goods into India. Now that the minister holding the portfolio of foreign affairs has come out in support of Bangladesh's cause, we hope things will start moving at a faster

pace towards materialisation of the small neighbour's demand.

Dhaka's expectations have been quite modest. It is not asking for any undue favour. Indian goods find their access into Bangladesh market at a tariff rate between 25 and 30 per cent, whereas commodities from Bangladesh face the international tariff rate of more than 60 per cent for access into the Indian market. This is no way of reducing the trade gap heavily tilted towards the big neighbour. Import from India has gone up by leaps and bounds, while our export to that country has gone up only fractionally.

A look at the increasing trade gap from Tk [taka] 71.43 crore in 1984-85 to Tk 1,567.97 crore in 1993-94, should convince one that urgent action is required to be taken in the area. We surely can do better than exporting goods valued at Tk 85.50 crore as we had done in 1993-94. The fact is that we have for such a long time allowed the gap to yawn through lack of a reciprocal approach from the other side. This can easily be remedied if there is enough will behind it.

India is a large market and there are commodities here, which, with a little bit of salesmanship, on top of the tariff waiver, can do the trick for us. Then India could set up joint venture projects in Bangladesh with buy-back arrangements. Let's concentrate on goods which have instant advantage in the Indian market and then go on to do some marketing research to find out fresh potential for some new exports. Things should move on the Indian side so that we get the access for our goods to India. In the meantime we can set the targets and proceed to reduce the trade gap accordingly.

India

India: Article Says Primakov Visit To Seal Arms Deal

BK0804125296 *Delhi DAINIK JAGRAN in Hindi*
4 Apr 96 p 6

[Article by Rai Singh: "The Russian Foreign Minister's Visit"]

[FBIS Summary] The "unusual timing" of Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov 30-31 March visit to India, i.e. just the after Indian general elections was announced — high level visits are postponed with such announcements — shows that both countries wanted it to take place.

After an extensive enquiry, what emerges as the main reason for it was the sale of Russian weapons to India, with both countries wanting a long-term sale agreement signed immediately. The joint Indo-Russian Commis-

sion established in 1994 to explore closer cooperation in arms and technology have already identified the latest Russian weapons India would be buying. Russia, too, has been informed about the quantity of the weapons India needs and the delivery dates.

Most of these issues have been settled in an interim agreement during Primakov's visit although there is no final agreement yet. Although, India does not have huge reserves of foreign currency to pay for arms purchases, it has never defaulted in debt payments. It was for this reason that Russia wanted an agreement with the existing Indian Government without waiting for a new government to be formed. So, really Primakov's brief visit at an "apparently inconvenient time" can be hailed as a success. The deal would also help economically-strapped Russia generate much-needed foreign exchange.

The importance of the visit can be seen "from the fact that Primakov chose to start a new chapter in Russian foreign policy by visiting India," which should not be interpreted as an attempt "to revive the old Cold War policy by creating a new front in Asia against the U.S. or the Western world."

There is no doubt that with Primakov's visit, ties have become closer. "This intensity in relations is also apparent in the three agreements he signed, the most important of which was the installation of the hot-line between the Prime Minister's Office in Delhi and the Kremlin."

India: Patents of U.S. Firms for Indian Rice, Snacks Challenged

BK0804125496 *Delhi NAVBHARAT TIMES in Hindi*
4 Apr 96 p 6

[Editorial: "America's Patent Pains"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. has again criticized India for its careless protection of patents. Its old grievance has been that in the absence of any adequate measure to protect patents strictly in India, U.S. companies are made to suffer millions of dollars in losses.

We have already witnessed the U.S. furor over the protection of patents and other intellectual property rights in India. Having shown its economic might during the Uruguay Cycle of the GATT negotiations, it has already bound India and other developing countries to its conditions. Later, there was agitation in India over U.S. conditions announced at the Uruguay talks. However, the Indian Government chose to overlook the agitation. Eventually, in the larger interest of the world trade, it decided to sacrifice its interest for the sake of the

success of the World Trade Organization talks, which the U.S. should have been grateful for.

However, now, the U.S. is charging India for its inability to safeguard patent laws and intellectual property rights. Instead of scrutinizing the validity of the charges, it would be proper to ask the U.S. Administration some pertinent questions. Does the patent system in the U.S. take into account the special circumstances in India? If so, then how it could patent the Basmati rice's trade mark there? This trade name is so widespread in India no one can even think of getting it patented here. Even if someone applies for it, no patenting agency would ever agree to give away this right. However, in the U.S., some company has managed to get the Basmati rice patent registered under its name, unmindful of the fact that Basmati rice has been commonly available in India since time immemorial. After this illegal patent registration, would the U.S. Administration deem Indian peasants, businessmen, and others dealing with Basmati rice as violating its intellectual property right?

Another question relates to Bikaneri Bhujia [dried snacks]. A U.S. multinational, Pepsi has started to use the name Bikaneri Bhujia for its product. Is this not a violation of the Indian producer's intellectual property rights? Is a right reckoned to be only one when it is written down?

The U.S. must realize that in India every transaction is not recorded in black and white. Mostly, these are done in the customary way by the word of mouth. Another question that needs to be posed to the U.S. Administration relates to nonresident Indians. It is well known that one of the major sources of U.S. scientific and technological talent has its origin in India. Does India get any royalty for this inherent and innate ability? Is their use not tantamount to using India's intellectual property?

India: 'Tibet Card' in Ties With PRC Viewed

BK0804124596 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 5 Apr 96 p 8

[Article by Batuk Vora: "Indian-China Relations Importance of the Tibet Card"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] THE Tibet issue has taken a back seat at the moment when China wants to set a timetable for Taiwan's merger with the 'motherland', following that of Hong Kong in 1997 and Macau in 1999. In India and in the West, at this time, some of the hard line 'Free Tibet' advocates continue to carry on their movement. They even want India to use the so called 'Tibet Card' in dealing with China.

Powerful Voice

An attempt was made by this writer last month to find out the mood of the Tibetans in India. The Dalai Lama is the most authoritative voice on this subject. "I am a half Marxist and half Buddhist... I like Communist socioeconomic theories but I do not like the narrow-minded nationalist Chinese Communists," he said while opening in the course of an interview.

Dwelling on the past, the Dalai Lama said he had met Mao Zedong more than a dozen times in the 1950s. "Chairman Mao had even told me once to have our own separate national flag, and said they were marching into Tibet to save it because once it was a powerful nation but now it was weak."

On the demand for a 'Free Tibet' raised by many of the Western support groups and his own stand on it, the Dalai Lama said that "sometimes I appreciate their position because I think that strengthens my position in negotiations with the Chinese. If Tibet was truly an ordinary Chinese province, then we would have no right to talk about Tibet." Explaining why he now demanded autonomy instead of independence, he said "the time has gone now to think of my nation, my state, as the world has become smaller. The process of globalisation is sweeping the world. It would be impractical to keep Tibet as a separate nation. What I want is to keep alive Tibet's own cultural heritage, identity and message of Buddhism."

China, as the Dalai Lama admits, is extremely sensitive on the issue of its integrity and sovereignty. Some may call them 'chauvinist or rigid narrow nationalists and ultra leftists', but for the Chinese leadership to take such a stand on Tibet or Taiwan is one of its long-standing and basic principles. China is not given to political dialogue and accommodation, once it has defined and set its territorial and strategic goals.

At a time when China faces no real threats and enjoys unparalleled calm along its frontiers, its drive to build power projection force capabilities and import advanced Russian arms and technology, like the Su-27s, can cause concern to its neighbours. But some knowledgeable Indian defence experts postulate that China is unlikely to directly employ its military power against India, despite its arms sale to Pakistan, unless its 'vital interests' were challenged. India can gain little from any political estrangement with China, they assert. However, the Tibetan lobby wonders why India is not using its powerful 'Tibet Card' when China attaches greater strategic importance to Tibet, than to its territorial or ideological postures?

Everybody knows India's use of the 'Tibet Card' could damage the ties that are developing with China. The Dalai Lama himself advocates a close and lasting friendship between India and China, two most populous and powerful neighbours, in the new world order. He also admitted that US politicians were very hesitant to say or do anything about Tibet that would affect the relations with China.

But, at the same time, some 'Free Tibet' advocates inside and outside the exile Tibetan administration have been harping on 'Free Tibet' without paying much attention to its implications for Sino-Indian ties in the broader global context.

Among the most vociferous supporters of Tibet's independence as a separate nation, going even beyond the Dalai Lama's stand, is Tibet Youth Congress (TYC). It is true that during the first decade of its inception, TYC spent much of its time in social, educational and cultural activities. But the emphasis has shifted to political activities. And their proposed referendum on the future of Tibet or their extended drive to internationalise the 'Free Tibet' campaign, continue to remain an irritant to China.

TYC general secretary Yangchen Dolkar recently admitted that "while advocating a middle path of accommodation with China, the Dalai Lama left the final decision to the Tibetan people and this gave them room to advocate full freedom for Tibet." **Tibet Card**

Some vociferous supporters of the 'Tibet Card', such as Prof Dawa Norbu, have been criticising India for "playing it down even when it is one of India's most powerful bargaining points". He also accuses New Delhi of "sacrificing the historical status of Tibet at the altar of Sino-Indian friendship as reflected in the 1954 treaty."

The question is: how far can India go in adopting this line?

The fact is that it neither helps solve the border dispute with China (which both nations have placed in cold storage), nor does it remove the Chinese suspicions against India as having big power and hegemonistic ambitions in Asia at the cost of other neighbours.

In fact, talking to a cross section of young Tibetans at Dharamshala, this writer found a different voice altogether: many of the new generation Tibetans do not want to return to Tibet under any circumstances, after having been born, grown up and enjoyed their life in democratic and colourful India.

Common Cause

Some do visualise a future scenario of the two most populous and ancient nations being locked in intense

but quiet political, economic and military rivalry as they compete for influence in parts of the Third World and South-East Asia, and seek to attract Western capital. But what should not be ignored at the same time is the fact that there certainly is a potential for both to make common cause on some vital international issues.

Both India and China strongly resent Western pressure on nuclear test ban and trade issues. Both resist the US global strategy to perpetuate its supremacy and might be tempted to cooperate in thwarting such pressure. Recently, China's ambassador to India Pei Yuanying, expressed his understanding of India's nuclear policy saying that "unlike the Americans, we will not pressurise India to sign the NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty] or the CTBT. [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] We respect India's independence in this matter."

The most important outcome of the end of Cold War in this part of the world is that Sino-Indian relations are no longer caught up by and large, in old-time politicking. Perhaps, this is the reason why China has strictly adhered to its line of support to the Simla Agreement on Kashmir, despite all the Pakistani attempts to bring it around in its favour. China does not want any "third party" meddling on Kashmir.

India is currently undergoing its own political turmoil, leaving New Delhi with no energy or time to think or review its China policy, with or without Tibet at its centre. But the time has come to distinguish the developing political scenario in various parts of Asia from a global perspective and from the angle of India's long-term interests. If the Chinese leadership takes an inflexible stand on certain issues and backs it by military moves, they also seem to realise its limitations in terms of developing a bilateral relationship with neighbours. Both Beijing and New Delhi have tremendous opportunity to develop their ties independent of cold war-style politics. The Tibet issue should not cause any break in this development.

India: Government To Back Taiwan Membership in WTO, Other Bodies

BK0804054396 Madras *THE HINDU* in English
5 Apr 96 p 6

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Government has assured support to Taiwan in its bid to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other multilateral organisations.

This was conveyed to the visiting Taiwanese delegation by the Commerce Secretary, Mr. Tejendra Khanna.

while inaugurating the fourth meeting of the India-Taiwan joint business cooperation committee, organised jointly by the FICCI [Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry] and ASSOCHAM [Associated Chamber of Commerce] here today.

Earlier, Mr. Jeffrey L.S. Koo, one of the top industrialists from Taiwan and the founder Chairman of the Indo-Taiwan joint business cooperation committee, had urged India's support for Taiwanese membership in UN organisations.

Mr. Vinod Khanna, Director General, India Taipei Association, said a few Taiwanese investment proposals are in the pipeline. "The money which is being committed to India by the Taiwanese are several times more than the total investment made by Taiwan over the years in India," he added. Incidentally, Taiwan has foreign exchange reserves of \$95 billions, which it wants to invest in third countries.

Mentioning that the 50-member delegation from Taiwan, consisting of top industrialists and importers and exporters, has set a new landmark in the Indo-Taiwan economic relationship, Mr. Khanna said the auto sector, floriculture, agriculture and electronics provided considerable interest to Taiwanese businessmen.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Koo, who is also the Chairman of the China Trust Bank, said that to facilitate trade and investment between the two countries. It would be desirable to have a double taxation avoidance treaty and an investment guarantee agreement between India and Taiwan.

Mr. Fei Lung Chen, chairman of the India Committee, Chinese National Association of Industry and Commerce (CNAIC), said that since the formation of the council, the setting up of the China Trust Bank today would provide a fillip towards developing the trading relationship between the two countries. India and Mainland China have been regarded as places of potential investments.

India: Proposed 'Growth Triangle' With Thailand, Sri Lanka Hailed

BK0804003896 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 6 Apr 96

[Commentary by Deb Prakash]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has been making a major bid in the past couple of years to break its international economic isolation by forging new alliances and consolidating some of the existing links. It has recently accepted the proposal put forward by Thailand to set up a growth triangle involving India, Sri Lanka, and Thai-

land. This is considered to be an important development in the context of India's recent efforts to play a more active role in South and Southeast Asia. Efforts in the last few years to get closer to the Association of South-east Asian Nations, ASEAN, have resulted in India's elevation from ASEAN's sectoral dialogue partner to a full dialogue partner. South Asia, too, has been able to forge a preferential trading arrangement of its own and the seven SAPTA [South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement] members have recently held further trade negotiations in Colombo for realizing the goal of SAFTA, South Asian Free Trade Area.

The new initiative of economic alliance of India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand is proposed to be given a thrust shortly. In fact, the idea of forging an economic alliance between India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar [Burma], and Bangladesh was first mooted at Bangkok in January this year when Indian External Affairs Minister Mr. Pranab Mukherjee went there to take part in the joint commission meeting. The growth triangle concept involving these five countries was based on a study by the Asian Development Bank, which had predicted vigorous economic rejuvenation in the region provided these countries worked together. While Sri Lanka and India reacted positively to the proposal put up by Thailand, Bangladesh and Myanmar did not respond very positively. During this visit to Bangkok, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee made a forceful plea for a partnership between governments and businessmen in jointly developing economic synergies between contiguous areas of member states which the ASEAN growth triangles and quadrangles represented.

Since Thailand, along with Singapore, was the foremost ally to lobby for the inclusion of India in the select club of full dialogue partners, it is hardly a surprise that Thailand should seek to establish closer ties with India in the economic sphere, and through India with the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] countries in general. As far as economic ties between Thailand and India are concerned, they are now on the upswing. Bilateral trade has already crossed \$1 billion and is well on its way toward the target of \$2 billion by the end of the year. There are currently 20 joint ventures and Thailand enjoys the status of third largest foreign investor in India. Opportunities are opening in areas such as food processing, agriculture, electronics, and software and information technology business. Similarly, there is considerable enthusiasm on the part of the Indian business sector to increase trade with and investment in Thailand.

As regard Sri Lanka, India's exports have gone up from \$425 million last year to \$501 million this year. However, the balance of trade has tilted more in

India's favor than in the case of Thailand, which is not surprising considering the trying time Sri Lanka is facing at present. The growth triangle, therefore, will come as a welcome bit of good news to Sri Lanka and India, especially since these two countries seek cooperation and collaboration, including international trade and investment for human resource development, tourism promotion, agriculture, fisheries, transport, and other infrastructural arrangements. What is happening is the stress on the joint interests of the three nations, so that any initiative undertaken will be of mutual benefit.

Thus, beginning of India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Subcontinent Economic Cooperation, ISTSEC, is a major development in the region.

India: Commentary Views Pakistan's Efforts 'To Malign' India

BK0804052196 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 7 Apr 96

[Commentary by Samuel Ved]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan's renewed efforts to malign India at the 52nd session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva yesterday received yet another blow when several countries clearly told Islamabad to stop its terrorist activities in Kashmir. Among these countries were Japan, Russia, and Nepal. Leaders of these countries human rights organizations while participating in a seminar organized as a part of the ongoing human rights commission's meeting told Pakistan to stop supporting terrorism in Kashmir. They said they favored all efforts aimed at restoring normalcy in that state.

Leader of the Japanese team, (Professor Ginay Himuchi), called on Pakistan to desist from helping terrorism not only in Kashmir but also in Afghanistan. He warned that terrorism was a double-edged weapon, which could harm even Pakistan. Russian representative, (Dr. Datiana Shomian), was of the opinion that past six years have been devastating for the people of Kashmir. She accused Pakistan of interfering in a state, which belonged to India. Similarly, the representative of Nepal also sounded a note of caution for Pakistan. The seminar on human rights focus on South Asia clearly reflected a general opinion among human rights experts in Geneva that while discussing human rights, the role of militants cannot be overlooked. This opinion had begun crystallizing last year at the UN human rights subcommission meeting after the brutal killing of a Norwegian tourist by Al-Faran in Kashmir. Until then, a general trend was to condemn security forces who protected innocent civilians from the attack of militants.

In the past six years, many human rights activists were taken for a ride by Pakistan about the real situation in Kashmir. It openly supported terrorist groups in Kashmir and when they were punished by the security forces, it tried to mislead international opinion saying that it was a case of human rights violation. That Pakistan's own friends have seen through its game plan is established by the fact that countries like Iran and China have refused to stand by it on the question of Kashmir. They no more support Pakistan's version of the right of self-determination as they see in it a conspiracy aimed at destabilizing settled regions.

Many Muslim countries, including Egypt, have complained that Pakistan soil was being used for training and arming Muslim fundamentalists to destabilize governments in their own countries. Pakistan's interference in Afghanistan is well known, although it has not stirred the international community enough. India has been trying hard to restore peace and normalcy in Kashmir through elections. Pakistan has been opposing any effort, which would bring peace in the valley. It claims that elections are not an alternative to the UN resolutions on Kashmir. This is Pakistan's new logic, apparently to justify its support to militancy in Kashmir.

India: Prime Minister Interviewed on Kashmir, Pakistan Ties

BK0804055796 Hong Kong FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW in English 11 Apr 96 pp 20-21

["Excerpts" of an interview with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao by regional editor V.G. Kulkarni; place and date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Kulkarni] There's a feeling abroad that while the rest of the world is moving on, India and Pakistan keep on fighting over Kashmir, which in turn is eroding their economic progress. India accuses Pakistan and Pakistan blames India.

[Rao] We have no illusions on this subject. We have to live with the situation and cope with it. There is a realization among most observers that the situation in Kashmir is changing. Compared to three, four years ago, the situation has vastly improved in Kashmir. While dealing with militancy on one side, we have proceeded to normalize on a wider front. We have announced parliamentary elections and Kashmir will elect representatives along with the rest of the country. We will also hold polls for the state assembly later.

[Kulkarni] What about Pakistan's charges of human-rights violations in the Kashmir valley and of Indian discrimination against Muslims?

[Rao] Let us take a look at what is happening to Muslims in Pakistan itself. If there are human-rights violations in Kashmir or in any other part of India, we have put in place mechanisms to deal with them. If Pakistan thinks that it has taken the custodianship of the Muslim interests, what are they doing to their own Muslims? We in India have created a secular polity and not a communal state. Religion is no qualification or disqualification in our country. The partition of India in 1947 has left a particular legacy; but as generations change, the shadow of partition on our societies and politics is receding. Already the change is palpable.

Riots and unrest are part of a developing country but the causes may not always be communal — there have been far fewer riots on communal issues in the recent past. It is not a question of religion that we have to deal with but with poverty and economic progress. It is here that our anti-poverty programmes will make the difference.

[Kulkarni] Is it true that India is not agreeable to a dialogue with Pakistan, especially to discuss Kashmir?

[Rao] That is totally incorrect. On the day Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was elected to office, in my congratulatory letter I proposed talks on all issues without preconditions. We later gave Pakistan some "non-papers" or nonbinding proposals asking for discussions on some outstanding issues. Our approach is that of the long-term resolution of problems; we need to address all issues. Now, whether you want to take up the most difficult problem first or create a climate conducive for eventually resolving the most difficult problem, it is a matter of one's approach. I had six rounds of talks with her predecessor and in every one of them we extended the hand of friendship and reiterated our intention to resolve all outstanding issues. We need to continue the dialogue rather than block it.

[Kulkarni] Any third-party mediation?

[Rao] When we are ready for unconditional talks, where is the need for mediation? We have the Simla agreement providing for direct negotiations; you can pick up the threads anytime and discuss all issues including Kashmir. One gets the feeling that Pakistan is interested in internationalizing the situation for its own reasons. Raising the Kashmir issue in various international forums has become a habit with Pakistan but not many countries are interested in that anymore. Internationalization of the subject has brought Pakistan no dividends.

[Kulkarni] What of the fears over Hindu fundamentalism advocated by the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]? Is secularism under threat?

[Rao] You can't wish away certain forces not only in this country but also in Pakistan or anywhere else. Secularism in this country is the basis of the state and we in the Congress and other non-BJP parties have been fighting the communal forces. While aberrations will be there, there are continuous efforts to prevent the communal virus from being injected deep into the people's psyche. If that happens, everything will be lost. Fire-eaters will have to be controlled, not only in India.

[Kulkarni] The United States is concerned over nuclear proliferation, and assumes the two sides are on the nuclear threshold.

[Rao] What have the others to show on the disarmament front? Five nuclear countries want to preserve their dominance. We have always advocated a step-by-step approach to eliminate nuclear weapons but within a definite time frame. The recent indefinite extension of NPT [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty], which is an imperfect treaty in itself, has sent a wrong-message. It reflects an attitude to nuclear proliferation that is not only wrong but also an attempt to maintain the privileged positions of a few. As to the threshold issue, it is ridiculously exaggerated.

[Kulkarni] India is seen as pursuing hegemony.

[Rao] It is a misperception created by the state of Pakistan for their own reasons. We are not obsessed with Pakistan. I am dealing with my own problems. In India, Pakistan is not a domestic issue but one notices a contrary situation in Pakistan.

[Kulkarni] What are the prospects of trade between the two countries?

[Rao] It is not just trade but also the totality of economic, political, cultural cooperation we have to look at. We have established the South Asian Free Trade Area. There are 600-700 items for free trade and it provides the nucleus. All of us should take advantage of this. But how do you expect trade to develop when Pakistan does not even allow the exchange of artists? We need to develop the most vital of all relations—people-to-people contacts.

India: Islamabad TV Reports Kashmir Violence, Human Rights Protest

BK0604160796 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 6 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Geneva, the Kashmir human rights delegation has presented a memorandum to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, calling upon them to undertake urgent action to stop India's unchecked reign of terror in the held territory. The Kashmiri delegation also provided documentary proof along

with the memorandum regarding large-scale and grave human rights violations by India in occupied Kashmir. The members were apprised of the circumstances of the murder of the well-known Kashmiri human rights activist Jalil Andrabi by Indian troops.

Meanwhile, Kashmiri leaders and a number of human rights organizations staged a demonstration in New Delhi protesting over the deteriorating human rights situation in occupied Kashmir. PTV special correspondent Ghulam Nabi Khayal reports from New Delhi:

[Begin recording] Several Indian human rights organizations staged a demonstration here in New Delhi and submitted a representation before the Supreme Court of India. The demonstrators were demanding a judicial inquiry into the custodial killing of a Kashmir lawyer and human rights activist, Jalil Andrabi, whose body was recovered from River Jhelum in Srinagar last week. The demonstrators also called for an end to the atrocities being committed in Kashmir Valley by the Indian security forces against innocent Kashmiri people. They represented human rights organizations including Citizens for Democracy, Gandhi Peace Foundation, and People's Union for Civil Liberties. The demonstrators included journalists, writers, filmmakers, and other intellectuals.

Meanwhile, the people of Kashmir have reiterated their decision of boycotting the forthcoming parliamentary elections in the state. At a mammoth congregation at Jami' Masjid [principal mosque] in Srinagar Friday, the proposed elections were described as a mockery of democracy and to be conducted without any participation of the people. [end recording]

And impervious to world opinion, Indian troops carried out more inhuman operations in the held valley. A number of Kashmiris were martyred by troops, mostly in custody. Five Kashmiris were martyred in custody in Pampur alone. Their bodies were found about 5 km from Pampur. Extensive crackdowns were carried out in Badgom, Srinagar, and Islamabad. Houses were ransacked, women molested, and a number of innocent people taken into custody. Mujahideen reacted by blasting a military vehicle at Badgom in Badgom area, and those aboard were either killed or injured. Mujahideen launched a rocket attack on a military camp at Chaodora in Badgom, killing and injuring a number of troops.

India: Samajwadi Party Splits in Bihar; New Party Launched

BK0504085496 Delhi All India Radio Network
in English 1530 GMT 5 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bihar unit of the Samajwadi Party has severed its links with the parent body in protest against the party's poll alliance with the

Janata Dal. The president of the breakaway Bihar unit, Mr. Gajendra Prasad Himanshu, told newsmen in Patna today that a new Bihar Samajwadi Party has been launched. He said the newly created party will contest 25 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

India: Commentary Welcomes Election Process in Kashmir

BK0504132896 Delhi All India Radio General
Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 5 Apr 96

[Commentary by Prakash Nanda, special correspondent of THE TIMES OF INDIA]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] It has increasingly been obvious that despite the nefarious designs of Pakistan to the contrary, the people of Jammu and Kashmir will send their representatives to the Indian parliament in the forthcoming elections. There were unmistakable signs that the Pakistani ISI [Inter Service Intelligence] had an important role in the recent incidents at the Hazratbal shrine where the terrorists had tried to desecrate the holy place which they had forcibly occupied and later threatened from an adjacent building to do the same. This action along with many others including the regular firing from the side of Pakistan near the Line of Actual Control have been aimed at foiling New Delhi's move to conduct elections in the state. In fact, the Benazir Bhutto regime has already vowed not to allow a peaceful election in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan, it is clear, is afraid that the whole international community will realize the folly of systematic disinformation campaign that the people of the state want to secede from India once elections to the parliament in the state are held.

Three facts need to be mentioned in this regard. First and foremost is the fact that the people of Jammu and Ladakh comprising nearly half of the state's population and inhabiting about 90 percent of the state's land area are insisting on the revival of the political process. In fact, they have been complaining as to why the fundamental right to vote and have a government of their choice had been denied to them for so long.

Secondly, even within the valley of Srinagar, which is the main center of disturbance with the Pakistani help, there are 600,000 Gujjars, 300,000 Pundits, 150,000 Sikhs and non-Kashmiris, more than 100,000 of Shias and Bakarwals, the Dads and the Baltis who among them constitute nearly half of the population. It is only among the 1.3 million Sunnis in the valley that one finds the elements having links with Pakistan or shouting for the so-called azadi [freedom]. Why is it that the international community should be sensitive to the demands of some Sunnis in the valley as against the

interest of others who consider themselves as parts and parcels of the Indian mainstream?

Thirdly, even among these 1.3 million, there is the Muslim Mojahedin group led by Ghulam Nabi Azad whose writ in some parts of south Kashmir, including Anantnag town, went unchallenged is favorably disposed toward the elections. [sentence as heard] Then there are leaders like Kuka Paray of the Ikhwanul Muslimine who have been fighting with a great degree of success with Jamaati militants who are nothing but ISI sponsored terrorists. All this is not to suggest that there are no problems in Kashmir, but then problems are there everywhere. In a democracy like India, problems need to be solved through negotiations among the people's representatives and the government. It is in this task that Jammu and Kashmir needs people's representatives to talk to and they only would emerge through elections. Many in this regard view that the elections will not make any sense since the state's biggest political party, the National Conference, led by Farooq Abdullah is not participating since its demand for New Delhi agreeing to restore Kashmir's pre-1953 status has not been agreed to. But, then the fact remains that the National Conference during the past six years had lost contact with the common mass of the state. It wanted the autonomy package so that it could go to the people for seeking their support saying that it had been fighting for their cause.

Filing of nearly 100 nominations for six seats from the state indicate the positive feelings of the people of the state toward this election. People of the state now want to give reins of power for governing themselves into the hands of their own representatives. The three national parties — Congress, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], and Janata Dal besides the (?state's) Panther's Party along with several independents including some former militants have filed their nominations. After the date of withdrawal, final picture will emerge. But there is no doubt that people of the state are now determined to give peace and democracy a chance. For this, they are ready to face small obstacles which Pakistan wants to create in the shape of increased insurgency in some parts of the valley with a view to thwart the elections.

India: BJP, Allies To Field 527 Candidates for Lok Sabha Elections

BK0804035296 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] has decided to withdraw its candidates from Behrampur in Orissa and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh. The party spokesman, Mr. K.R. Malkani, said this while talking to reporters in New Delhi today.

[Begin recording] [Malkani, in progress] ... for Behrampur has withdrawn. We want that one should (?gain) real good fight. That's why we have withdrawn this candidate from Behrampur.

[Unidentified reporter] You are supporting whom then?

[Malkani] We will await and let the concerned party contact us, then we will consider matter in consultation with the state unit. [end recording]

The party spokesman said the BJP is fielding 527 candidates along with its allies. Four hundred and seventy-seven candidates will contest on the BJP symbol and 20 on the Shiv Sena symbol. Twenty-six seats have been left for the BJP's ally, the Samata Party, and four for the Haryana Vikas Party.

India: Party Expels 3 Leaders for Contesting Kashmir Elections

BK0804035096 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 6 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, the National Conference has expelled three of its senior leaders for violating the party's decision not to contest the forthcoming polls. They include the former speaker, Babu Permanand.

The Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has expressed his resolve to conduct free and fair elections in the state. Addressing a meeting of candidates for the Jammu and Udhampur constituencies, he cautioned them against the attempts of militants and Pakistan agencies to communalize the situation.

India: Bharatiya Janata Party Releases Election Manifesto

BK0704162896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A strong and secure India, a debt free economy, a riot free society, and a clean administration are promised by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] if voted to power in the Lok Sabha elections. In the 80-page manifesto released in New Delhi today, the party president, Mr. L.K. Advani, says a qualitatively new chapter in the governance of the country will be provided.

On security, the manifesto promises tough deterrent laws against terrorists and a free hand to the security forces in Kashmir to deal with supply of men and arms from Pakistan. Promising free elections in Jammu and Kashmir after terrorism is brought under control, the manifesto has proposal for creation of regional councils for Jammu and Ladakh.

On illegal migration from Bangladesh, it proposes deportation and declaring all property deals between Indians and illegal immigrants as null and void.

On defense, the BJP manifesto says it will set up a national security council and exercise the option to induct nuclear weapons. Promising to link defense expenditure to real requirements, the party says it will upgrade the conventional weapon systems.

On economic matters, the BJP promises deregulation and confining the public sector only to sensitive areas. Foreign investment will be encouraged only in infrastructure, high tech areas, and in the export sector. The exit policy will be allowed for industry if it fulfills corresponding obligations toward labor.

On minorities issues, the BJP says it will disband the Minorities Commission and entrust its responsibilities to the National Human Rights Commission. It will also ban foreign funds for religious organizations and set up special courts for trial of those accused in communal riots.

Other promises include construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya, 33 percent reservation of seats for women in all elected bodies, and a uniform Civil Code to give women property rights.

India: Congress Suspends Moopanar, To Expel Other 'Rebel' Candidates

BK0804105096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress-I has suspended its senior leader, Mr. G.K. Moopanar, from the primary membership. The party general secretary, Mr. Madhav Singh Solanki, said in a press release that the action has been taken for Mr. Moopanar's deliberate nonacceptance of the party's decision, which amounted to breach of discipline. In another release, the party said that all the Congress members contesting against official nominees would be expelled from the party for six years. Presidents of all Pradesh [state] Congress committees have been asked to forward names of such rebel candidates.

The party joint secretary, Major Ved Prakash, said that former Union Ministers Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, Mr. P. Chidambaram, and Mr. M. Arunachalam, and the legislature party leader from Tamil Nadu, Mr. S.R. Balasubramaniam, are among such candidates to be expelled immediately.

The Congress-I president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, has appointed seven new joint secretaries of the All India Congress Committee-I. The party general secretary announced this in a press release in New Delhi today.

The joint secretaries will assume charge with immediate effect.

Iran

Iran: Jannati Discusses Elections, Hajj in Sermon

LD0504135796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0755 GMT 5 Apr 96

[Second sermon of Tehran Friday prayers by Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, spokesman of the Guardian Council — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] There are several subjects, which in the second sermon I must refer to within the scope of available time.

In my view, the most important issue is that of elections. First of all and for the umpteenth time, I thank our beloved nation, one and all, for their welcome for the elections. According to estimates, 80 percent of those eligible to vote did vote. That is a great and desirable point. We did not believe it would come true; God wished it. The recommendations by the exalted leader and other officials and publicity organs, as well as the people's religious background, brought that about — pleasing friends and infuriating the foes. God willing, the Almighty and Lord of the age, God's blessing be upon him, have also been pleased. May the prayers of the Lord of the age be with you. [passage omitted]

The respected Interior Ministry really did not interfere at all in the elections as to who should get the votes and who should not. There is plenty to be thankful for. I beseech the Almighty to reward all those officials in this and the other world. [Crowd chants approval]

As to the issues that I must raise; there is the issue of the invalidation of some election results. Naturally, some are dissatisfied. If we want to take all the satisfaction and dissatisfaction into account, some will be dissatisfied when invalidation of results takes place and some will be dissatisfied when results are confirmed. It is not true that any confirmation will satisfy all and any invalidation will dissatisfy all. At the moment we are under much pressure to invalidate the elections results here, there, and everywhere. We really are in a moral dilemma. There are also those who keep saying: Do not invalidate. As soon as the results are invalidated somewhere, some people send letters and telegrams to say thank you and express their pleasure. Particularly the Hezbollah kids express much joy, saying you did well to invalidate. Some, obviously, become dissatisfied and, unfortunately, sometimes embark on spreading rumors. That is terrible.

Now let me tell you the procedure. First, the principle of our work is based on confirmation, which means the principle is soundness. We believe in that principle. That means that elections by their primary nature require the soundness of ballots, ballots should be confirmed to have been placed in the box, and those candidates that receive the majority of votes should be confirmed and go to the Majles. That is our principle and that applies to most constituencies. Right now, with the exception of about 80 constituencies where we have a second round of elections — where the soundness of polls has been confirmed — most of the first round results have been confirmed. We have not had invalidation of results in more than four or five cases. There are 196 constituencies.

Anyway, the emphasis is on soundness. Then sometimes we see that the elections are not sound, that is to say, the reports that we receive. We see the executive committee's report, the supervision committee's report, and the special investigator's report. The central committee takes care and also submits a report. Finally, the task comes to the Guardian Council. Taking those reports into account, the council sometime considers it necessary to send an investigator and does so. When the investigator returns, the council sums things up to see whether the elections have been sound or not. If the elections have been sound and the objections submitted have been found invalid and do not affect the results, then the council confirms those results. If the council considers the results not to be sound, then according to law and its legal duty, it has no choice but to automatically invalidate those results. What else can it do. If it should ignore all objections, all misdeeds, and, in particular, when the moneyed or the powerful commit those deeds, it should close its eyes to them, then the supervisory *raison d'être* of the Guardian Council will be destroyed. Then what will that supervisor be for?

We must confirm the results as far as we can; but there are times when we cannot confirm.

So much for that issue.

The next issue: The soundness of the elections is tied to the existence of sound competition where the candidates can compete. That is one point. Another one is that there should not be any deception, trickery, buying of votes, threats, inducements, and the like. The people should vote voluntarily, according to their understanding, freely, without intimidation and expectation. Then there will be sound elections. Such ballots are accepted and confirmed and valued. If conditions are disrupted, then the elections lose their soundness. Let us say there is no possibility for competition. Someone spends a lot of money, which will blind all and not let anyone else

get a foot in. Someone else has no money. One of our friends, whom I respect, said something that made me most uncomfortable. He said someone in a constituency — he named the constituency as well as the person — he said a candidate there, who had been a deputy, told him: During the first round of elections I sold my one car in order to campaign. Now we have gone into the second round and I am stuck without money and do not know what to do. I want to withdraw and give up. I have no more money to campaign. In this way a sound and experienced candidate cannot compete any longer because he has no money, or gives up or does not win votes. Then there is someone who can spend so much money that it covers up all his faults, and people cannot recognize him for what he is. When money is involved no-one thinks anymore who the person is.

The reports we receive! They arrange carnivals. Let me tell you that there have been very few of such cases. I confirm that these have been rare cases, but the action that has been taken has been based on such acts. They deck the streets, illuminate the sensitive parts of the city, and distribute sports equipment! That is called buying votes. They even give away money. A father of a martyr came to me twice when I was visiting the Ma'sumah Shrine [in Qom], God's peace be upon her, and said: I am the father of a martyr. They have come to my house with an envelope with 2,000 tumans in it. On the envelope they had written vote for so and so. They have done the same with others too. Did our children die for that? That is what he said. Things like that happen.

In one particular case, illegal campaigning had taken place — I cannot specify further as misunderstandings can occur and then I have to eliminate misunderstandings — some illegal campaigning had taken place introducing a certain candidate among many, showing his picture for seven, eight, or ten minutes. Very well, this certain candidate benefited from such a campaign, and another who had not engaged in illegal campaigning remained unknown.

In another case, extravagant sums were spent. Our reports mention such cases and we pay attention to these reports. For example, in another case dozens of thousands of 100-page notebooks were produced and distributed, costing 25 million tumans and bearing the picture of a certain person. Does that mean anything but: Take this and vote?

We have also had threats and intimidations in certain cases. In some other cases we could see interference by officials. They should not interfere. In certain constituencies such interference had a powerful effect. Such persons have no right to interfere. I fear the day when political and financial personalities, a certain office, or

a certain center decides to interfere in elections. Then, there would be no room for competition. They would have the power and the money. [passage omitted]

If we do not stop such misconduct, a flood will be created wiping us away with it.

Some people have totally forgotten that we have an Islamic Republic here. They think this is a Western country. They indulge in Western-type campaigns. Why have we forgotten our principles then? Here we have an Islamic Republic system. Here is the home of the deprived. This system belongs to the tyrannized. Here we have a government of the deprived and tyrannized, as the imam [Ayatollah Khomeyni] used to say. Does our behavior match and coordinate with such a system? What would others think? [passage omitted]

I should mention that in our latest session last week, we were discussing the situation in a certain constituency with a major problem. We discussed the matter for one whole hour and still we could not make a final decision. I myself said that I could not make a final judgement. If we wanted to endorse the results, there was a problem. We also had a problem if we wanted to invalidate the results. The case still remains unsolved, and we should look at it later to see what we can do with it. That is the extent of how particular we are in our work. Certain gentlemen think that we are sitting there and as soon as a case is mentioned we invalidate it immediately. That is not the case. If we were working in that manner we could not remain in office. We would have been occupying that post illegitimately. I hope that we are not illegitimate. [passage omitted]

If we do not mention a certain case, it is because we do not want to mar any reputations. I hope that those concerned do not complain. The same considerations arose in the case of another candidate. We kept thinking about it. Should we confirm him, should we reject him? We discussed his virtues and weak points. Eventually, we decided that it was not right to endorse the case of a person, enabling him to go to the Majles, a person whose earlier affiliations to the hypocrites [Mojahidin-E Khalq] had been confirmed. We should still be careful even if there is no more sign of that affiliation today. In the past we have been harmed by carelessness in such cases. Very well, if we reveal such things we would harm that person's reputation. We do not wish to do that. All we want is to carry out our task of managing the elections. [passage omitted]

I would like to ask our dear nation to vote in the second round of elections with the same degree of enthusiasm as in the first round.

My dear brothers and sisters: One should feel very guilty for not voting. Voting is a duty. However, the duty does not end here. What completes the picture is voting for the best and most suitable candidate.

I want to quote some valuable words in our eminent leader's new year message. He said: You should send individuals to the Majles who are devoted to Islam [Fadayi-e Eslami] and believe that it is only Islam that can remedy the problems of this country. They should know and believe this, instead of thinking that one can solve the problems of our people through money, connections, and political and economic maneuvering. Everything should be put in its rightful place. However, the key to all solutions is Islam and the sense of religious commitment. It was these things that salvaged us by creating this revolution. It was these things that toppled the shah and cut off the hands of the United States. Why should we ignore and forget such a power?

I want to add here that certain people should not try to weaken the pillars of Islamic ideology in this country under certain pretexts such as liberalism [preceding word in English] and freedom-seeking. That is to say, if the liberties and freedoms that are not sanctioned by Islam — or in other words, Western style freedoms — are brought forward in a bid to win votes, then one must give up hope in everything and prepare to lose everything we have achieved.

It is these people who can hold out against the enemies and defend you. They should be allowed to guard the frontiers and remain in charge of the bastions. They should occupy the country's sensitive and determining posts. One should vote for them.

If we have survived so far, it has been purely due to the blessings brought about by the blood of these people. If our honor and integrity is to survive in the future — and God willing, it will — it will still be thanks to these individuals. We should not allow this valuable asset and key to victory leave our hands easily.

Everyone should know whom they should vote for. Voting on its own is not enough. Instead, one should vote for individuals who care for Islam. This is because care for Islam also means care for the oppressed and the economically deprived people, the country's development, and its political and economic power. In other words, an individual like our imam. [passage omitted]

Then, we hope, God willing, that the second round of elections is carried out with the same dignity as the first round. I tell those dear ones whose constituency results have been invalidated — even though the number of those constituencies is small — that we respected

your votes; we wished your votes to be cast freely; we wished that votes are not imposed on you; we wished your votes not to be influenced by money; we wished deviating propaganda not to influence you. Some have said astonishing things. One wonders how they dared. They have said things to make everyone's mouth water. Now, even if the government mobilized all its forces for several years, none of that gentleman's promises could have been fulfilled. Then, of course, an ordinary person will think that he is good and telling the truth. Telling the truth! You must see how practical those things are. It is useless to dream. Are votes bought in this way valid? We have respected your votes. [passage omitted]

We hope, God willing, that such things do not happen in the second round.

Someone wrote to me saying that he and his family of seven children are living in a 12-square-meter room. I am amazed that someone would live like that and then someone would spend so much. No one is denying that any task entails expense, but to go over the limit, which is wasteful, is not appropriate under the circumstances. What is one to say to the man with the letter? To the person who has not the money to pay for potatoes at 250 or so tumans a kg. [passage omitted]

We must do something so such people can endure their hardship. [passage omitted]

Well, we will leave the election subject here.

Another issue is the Assembly of Experts. We are going to hold elections for experts in Tehran. Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Seyyed Ahmad Khomeyni, one of the experts and our dear brother, has passed away. [crowd chants]

He was a member of the Assembly of Experts and his place is empty there. Election for the experts is going to take place on the Friday the elections are taking place. Names of candidates are to be put forward and you should chose the best one among them; you must vote for them. Of course, there is also an empty seat for Mazandaran, but there have been some problems and I do not know if we are going to solve it.

The last issue is the Hajj. Thank God, our dear, hard working, revolutionary, and powerful brother Hajj Agha Reyshahri, may God grant him success and more success, is serving the revolution and Islam, as well as guiding and leading the pilgrims. He has pointed out, as the leader of the revolution did earlier, that the disavowal from infidels cannot be separated from the Hajj. What we understand from the Koran and Islamic teachings is that the Hajj is not a private worship, such as the daily prayer which can be done at home. It is not a worship that can be done privately while others

are doing the same thing at the same time. This is what we understand about the Hajj. We think that the Hajj, especially the order for gathering in one place — the place of Abraham, the place reminding one of Abraham and his idol breaking, where according to the Koran one must pray if there is enough room, and where one must move around and act with Abraham on one's mind — cannot be a simple responsibility and a simply duty. It must be comprehensive and include the interests of the people and those of the international Islamic community. [crowd chants approval] This can only take place if the pilgrim is able to deal with the fundamental and rooted problems facing Islam. There are many problems that Islamic countries face. However, the most fundamental problem is that of the tyrants. [passage omitted]

There are some people who are willing to express belief in God there, but they are not willing to express their disbelief in the tyrants. The Koran says the opposite. [passage omitted].

The Koran says that you should first settle the account of tyrants and then establish relations with God. When Islam orders such things, how can Muslim people gather in one place and fail to pay attention to such a clear issue before returning home. How can they fail to look at the main problem facing Islam. We have problems in Bosnia, Palestine, Chechnya, Iraq, Kashmir, and other places, but this is our main problem. If we are able to solve this issue, other problems will be solved automatically. If we fail to solve this problem, this cancer will kill us. We have to face the issue everywhere in the most suitable form.

The most suitable form on the international Islamic scene takes place in Mecca, which cannot be replaced by any other place. No other conference, congress, or gathering can take its place. This issue must be respected and the responsibility must be carried out according to the existing possibilities. We hope that pilgrims to the house of God will be able to carry out their devotional and spiritual duties for God properly and as they should, because this aspect of duties must not be overlooked.

However, they must also carry out the political aspects of the Hajj. This is the message of our nation, our imam, and our leader to the world of Islam. This message must be carried forward and this characteristic of the Islamic revolution must be emphasized there. [passage omitted]

**Iran: Hajj Supervisor Arrives in Medina,
Comments on Pilgrims**

*LD0804173596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic
of Iran First Program Network in Persian
1630 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Heading a delegation of officials of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mohammadi-Reyshahri, representative of the supreme jurisconsult and supervisor of the Iranian pilgrims to the house of God, left for Medina this afternoon. He was seen off by Mr. Mohammadi-Golpaygani, the head of the esteemed leader's office, and Mr. Adnan, the Saudi charge d'affaires in Tehran.

Before leaving Tehran Mr. Mohammadi-Reyshahri was interviewed by a Central News Unit correspondent. [passage omitted] He pointed out that this year, as in previous years, the Iranian pilgrims, in accordance with the instructions of the esteemed leader, will attain all the lofty goals set out by the great leader of the Islamic revolution for the Abrahamite Hajj. He said: The policies of the esteemed leader's headquarters in Saudi Arabia are based on the instructions of the esteemed leader, calling Muslims to unity of expression, fraternity, concord between all the world's Muslims, the awareness of Muslims to divisive plots hatched by foreigners, the return of the world's Muslims to their shining past, and striving to make all Islamic societies more aware. [passage omitted]

According to the latest report received from our correspondent in Holy Medina, Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mohammadi-Reyshahri arrived in Medina at 1930 Tehran time, and was welcomed by members of the esteemed leader's headquarters and Iranian diplomats stationed in Saudi Arabia.

**Iran: South African Foreign Minister Nzo Arrives
in Tehran**

*MB0804153596 Johannesburg SAsm Radio Network
in English 1400 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo has arrived in Tehran for a three-day visit to discuss expanding relations between South Africa and Iran. His visit comes despite efforts by the United States to persuade the South African Government to stop cooperating with Iran, which the American Government accuses of supporting terrorism.

In talks with Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, Mr. Nzo said his country was interested in boosting relations with Iran in all fields. The minister, who last visited Iran in October 1994, was also to officially inaugurate his country's embassy in Tehran which opened last year. Economic cooperation has been

increasing steadily and Iran now provides 90 percent of South Africa's oil.

**Iran: Commentary on Expansion of Iranian, South
African Relations**

*LD0804115396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic
of Iran First Program Network in Persian
1001 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo started his three-day visit to Iran today. He is to meet Iran's president and foreign minister, participate in the joint economic commission of the two countries, and open the South African Embassy in Tehran. [passage omitted]

The expansion of relations between Iran and South Africa, in the fields of economics, politics, and culture, is due to their strengths and capacities and their mutual understanding of each other's capabilities. The significant experience South Africa enjoys in mining precious metals, including gold and diamonds, and Iranian expertise in the oil and petrochemical industries, have been sources of interest for both countries. Furthermore, the two sides are able to supply each other's industrial and agricultural requirements and thus boost trade relations.

There is no doubt that the common policies of the two countries and their cooperation at international organizations, especially within the Non-Aligned Movement, has prepared the ground for greater cooperation in the fields of economics and trade. This is particularly true because South Africa's ruling African National Congress had extensive relations with Iran before the collapse of the apartheid regime and enjoyed our country's political support.

The visit of South Africa's foreign minister and the opening of that country's embassy in Tehran indicate the opening of a new chapter in relations between the two countries that will definitely include the expansion of relations in the fields of politics, economics, and culture.

**Iran: U.S., Pakistani Involvement in Afghanistan
Criticized**

*LD0504141296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic
of Iran in English 1130 GMT 5 Apr 96*

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UN representative in Afghanistan Mahmoud Mestiri, in an interview, has accused Pakistan of direct intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Speaking to reporters in Kabul, the UN representative said that the interventionist policies

of Pakistan in Afghanistan is a fact which sometimes grows very strong.

The statements of Mestiri are important since it is the first ever comment of a UN representative over the interferences of the Kabul [as heard] government in the domestic affairs of Afghanistan and dragging on of crisis there. Meanwhile, the Pakistani Government rules out any interference in Afghanistan and giving support to different warring factions.

According to observers, in his speech Mestiri has had on mind the intensification of the military, economic, and social operations of Taleban in its controlled areas. Among the claims of Mestiri are the massive foreign political and military aids granted to the Islamic students of Taleban, their aim of capturing the capital of Kabul, the economic and social aids of Pakistan in the western parts of Afghanistan and the areas controlled by the Taleban, and the emphasis of Islamabad in expanding Chaman-Torghondi highway.

Meanwhile, political analysts pen great importance to the statements of Mestiri since it comes on the eve of the beginning of a new round of UN operations in Afghanistan. A major part of the new round of the mission of Mestiri's visit is to focus on attracting the confidence and support of Afghan warring parties. Additionally, the statements of Mestiri — while Western countries, especially the United States, are giving military aids more openly than the past to the Taleban — indicate two significant points. So far the Islamabad government has been a puppet for the implementation of U.S. policies in Afghanistan, but now there is no need to it. Secondly, the UN — as a puppet of the Western countries in regional crises, particularly in Afghanistan — sees no reason to pursue double standard. Clear statements of the UN representative over the interferences of Pakistan in Afghanistan arise from this fact.

Iran: Majles Speaker Says Iran Ready for Talks With EU

LD0704170896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A delegation from the Irish parliament met and conferred with Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri this afternoon.

At the meeting Mr. David Andrews, a current member of the Irish parliament and former Irish foreign minister, briefed the Majles Speaker on his talks with the ministers of foreign affairs and construction jihad and other officials of our country.

He also described the trip by the Majles speaker to Ireland as a turning point in relations between the two countries. He called on the expansion of mutual ties in all areas.

Nateq-Nuri referred to the fact that the two nations have several common denominators which could be a basis for the establishment of stable relations between the two countries. He expressed the hope that relations between Iran and the European Union would be expanded during Ireland's term of presidency, and that the EU would regard issues relating to the Islamic Republic of Iran with a more realistic viewpoint.

He said the policy of talks to remove ambiguities was a correct and sensible policy. He called for talks between Europe and Iran to remove the existing ambiguities.

He criticized tension-creating policies on the international scene. He stressed Iran's preparedness to hold talks to remove any ambiguity. He added: There are also many questions and ambiguities for the Islamic Republic of Iran about the performance of some European countries. He said: Certain countries have given shelter to and protect terrorists who have confessed to terrorism and murder in Iran.

Iran: Tehran Views Israel's 'Illegal' Nuclear Activities

NC0804091496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0345 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Zionist regime's illegal nuclear activities and the leakage of radioactive material from the Dimona nuclear reactor have aroused the concern of the Middle East countries over the dangers emanating from it. Syrian officials have reemphasized their position on the need to control the Zionist regime's nuclear activities and on the need for this regime to observe international pacts and laws and have demanded that Tel Aviv's nuclear activities and installations be placed under international supervision. In the Egyptian Parliament, opposition deputies have stressed the need to examine Tel Aviv's illegal nuclear activities and find ways to confront them.

Following reports on the leakage of radioactive material from the Dimona nuclear power plant, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak last week arrived in Damascus on an unexpected visit and held talks with Syrian officials on the Zionist regime's nuclear activities. The Arab League will meet to discuss this problem and ways

to confront the threat and danger emanating from Tel Aviv's nuclear activities.

The Zionist regime has always resorted to nuclear activities to implement its expansionist policies. America, which considers itself the leader of efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear arms, has taken no steps to confront the Zionist regime's nuclear activities and has helped Tel Aviv gain access to nuclear arms. Although Israel says it does not own nuclear arms, reports about Tel Aviv's nuclear activities say there are over 200 nuclear warheads in Israel's nuclear depots.

The Zionist regime has not signed the Nonproliferation Treaty and has refused inspection of its nuclear installations by inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Zionist regime's refusal to accept international agreements and IAEA inspection of its nuclear installations and the possibility of extremist Zionists infiltrating the Zionist regime's nuclear installations have made regional countries even more sensitive and worried about Israel's illegal activities. Thus they are trying to find a way to confront these activities.

Although the Zionist regime is trying to gain the greatest possible access to the illegal and inhuman nuclear weapon to dominate the region and—by using it—gain the concessions it wants from the regional Arab countries, its activities speak of a tragedy that has aroused the concern of the regional countries. Since even those countries that have accepted compromise with the Zionist regime oppose its nuclear activities, observers believe that Israel's nuclear activities not only impede the compromise process and threaten regional peace and security, but—in view of the Middle East's role in international issues—also threaten international peace and security.

Iran: Commentary on 'Valuable' Gains of Breaking Ties With U.S.

LD0804134896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The anniversary of the break in diplomatic relations between Iran and America [9 April 1980] is an auspicious day that tells of the emergence of a new and blessed phase in the diplomatic history of Iran. This was a phase in which the long-standing desire of the noble people of our country to break relations with America was fulfilled after years of domination by America over the affairs of our country and Washington's conspiratorial interference in aspects of our social life. Thus a new trend was inaugurated in the Islamic Republic of Iran's relations with the outside world.

In truth, this phase should be considered as a new stage in the history of diplomatic relations between revolutionary countries and colonialist countries, also with super-powers. The numerous and valuable gains of this event merit extensive academic research and study.

Without doubt, at the time when Jimmy Carter, the then president of America, took the step of breaking relations with Iran — following the occupation of that country's Den of Spies in Iran and the escalation of popular protest against Washington — he did not expect or imagine that this move would not only create an occasion for celebration and joy in our country, but would open up a new door to diplomacy based on the Islamic Republic of Iran's revolutionary principles.

It is clear that the break in diplomatic relations between Iran and America fully matched the slogans that the people of Iran were chanting during the length of the revolutionary struggle and which pushed the Islamic Republic's system toward the achievement of greater independence and speedier realization of the slogan: "Neither West nor East."

Of course, after America's move to block [preceding word in English] Iranian assets in America and break relations with our country, the Democrats ruling over the White House and their Republican rivals expected that the Islamic Republic of Iran would come under political and economic pressure and would accept resuming relations [with America]. They expected that Iran — finding itself in a weak and supplicant position — would request Washington to do something in this connection. Political observers in America and America's foreign policy strategists also emphasized this expectation, arguing that Iran's revolutionary system will eventually fall into America's lap just like a ripe apple. They thus displayed Washington's enthusiasm for restoring relations with Tehran.

But, just as later incidents and developments showed, this expectation was not fulfilled in any way and in spite of extensive pressure, the people of our country continued their anti-American struggles, dashing the hopes of arrogant America to the ground with their historic and unique resistance and steadfastness.

Perhaps the high point of America's efforts to restore relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran crystallized in [Robert] McFarland's abortive trip to Iran, bringing his symbolic presents with him [including a cake and the Bible]. It was a trip which, once again, caused the air in Islamic Iran to be filled with cries of: "Death to America." The people of our country — keeping in mind the principles of the Islamic revolution — once again declared their explicit and open opposition to Washington's world-devouring policies.

There is no doubt that America's expectations will never bear fruit if that country's arrogant and interventionist policies continue. The extensive financial and military support given by that country to the occupying Zionist regime will not be overlooked by the government and people of Iran. This is especially so since Washington, in the course of its abject endeavors against Iran, has met with many failures, including the failure to mobilize and persuade its industrial allies to impose economic sanctions against Iran.

It is obvious that these failures and inabilities are indicative of new developments in the diplomatic history of the world and they dent the so-called leadership of Washington in the current international community.

Iran: 'Systematic Violation' of Human Rights in U.S. Viewed

LD0704140196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1000 GMT 7 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] One of the issues that arises frequently in the American community, and at times attracts world opinion, is the systematic violation of human rights and the rights of minorities in that country, which is carried out by the government, racist individuals or groups, or organized criminal outfits. Today the people of the world believe America to be a country, which because of its burgeoning economy in the past decades, has accepted non-American people and communities from other countries as minorities. These are in addition to the millions of blacks living there. Spanish speakers from Latin America, mainly Mexican, as well as Asians, are among those ethnic and racial minorities that — within the 250-million-strong American community — beside serving in heavy and exhausting jobs, are faced with inhuman problems such as discrimination and aggression. Most of those immigrants and minorities live in the main eastern and western states of that country; that is, Texas, Florida, and California.

It seems that at the moment the mistreatment of these minorities by the U.S. police has become a trend and the norm. Once in while the disclosure of the discriminatory and criminal behavior by police or judiciary in one of the states inflames the minority communities. The beating last week of a Mexican couple by the Californian police and the broadcast of the shocking scenes of that atrocity by one of the state's television stations provoked extensive anger and protest by minorities and immigrants, particularly Mexicans. In the wake of that incident, the Mexican Government officially objected

to the U.S. Administration and the State Department of that country, and released a report, which added that in the past six years, 94 Mexican immigrants have lost their lives in America as a result of violent treatment. In most cases, these have been innocent victims and the perpetrators have been released without being tried or punished.

Of course, the immigration issue has always been a major problem in relations between America and Mexico, so much so that almost half the workforce applying to enter the United States is comprised of young unemployed Mexican men. Of these, a small number succeed to get in, but once inside they face hundreds of problems, one of which is violent, discriminatory, and savage treatment by the U.S. police. On the whole, cases of violation of human rights and violence against minorities in America are such that to put America at the head of the countries that violate human rights and the rights of minorities is no exaggeration. The violence in Los Angeles in 1991 is one example. In that incident the beating of a black man provoked protests and riots by blacks in California and then right across America. The riot, of course, was put down through the intervention of federal troops.

Bearing that in mind, American affairs observers and experts believe the recent beating of two Mexican nationals by the Californian police — which provoked a wave of protest and fury by the minorities — can end in a similar riot to that in 1991, which would engulf the whole of America.

Iran: Commentary Sees Rivalry Between U.S., France in Middle East

LD0804185396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1703 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of France, who arrived in Cairo on the second leg of his trip to the Middle East, ended his visit to Egypt after two days of talks with that country's officials.

At the end of the talks between Jacques Chirac and Egyptian authorities, they declared their positions on various regional issues in the course of a news conference. Regarding the recent American allegations against Libya, suggesting that it is producing chemical weapons at one of its factories, the French president announced: The French Government cannot confirm the American allegations.

Jacques Chirac said the following regarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the Middle East that is being carried out by Israel: His country supports Egypt's

proposal to make the Middle East an area free from destructive weapons.

The question of Israel's nuclear weapons and the resulting dangers have turned into one of the most important regional problems of the day following reports about radioactive leaks at the Dimona power station in occupied Palestine. For this reason, the countries of the region are trying to confront this threat by gaining the support of the big powers.

The proposal to make the Middle East a nuclear weapons-free zone was raised quite some time ago. It is only Israel that carries out nuclear activities in the Middle East and it is said that it possesses more than 200 nuclear warheads. France's support for the proposal to make the Middle East an area free from destructive weapons is, in fact, support for an end to Israel's nuclear activities and the destruction of that country's atomic weapons.

As for Lebanon, the French president stressed his country's usual stance, supporting respect for Lebanon's territorial integrity and the withdrawal of foreign forces from that country and calling for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 425, demanding Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

The setting out of Jacques Chirac's positions in the course of his trip to the Middle East reveals that France's policies on many Middle Eastern issues run counter to those of the United States and the Zionist regime.

Jacques Chirac, who was visiting Lebanon as the French president after about 53 years and who was visiting that country as the first president to do so from a western country since the end of the Civil War in Lebanon — and who went on to visit Cairo — clarified the importance attached to the Middle East in France's foreign policy with his trip, and, by declaring positions opposed to those of the United States, he demonstrated his inclination to pursue a policy that is independent from that of the United States.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the bipolar system — which paved the way for the adoption of policies, independent of the United States, by European countries — created the opportunity for France to embark on rivalry with the United States in many regions. In the Middle East, France has always been viewed as an influential power. France's effort to come closer to the countries of the region, especially the countries with which there is a greater possibility for cooperation, is a measure being undertaken by France to advance its own policies in the Middle East and gain the upperhand over its rival countries — each

of which is trying to attain a greater presence in the strategic region of the Middle East. The differences in the positions of France and the United States over many Middle Eastern issues not only reveals the inability of the United States to gain the support of its western allies, but also highlights differences which can give rise to long-term friction between the policies of France and the United States in the Middle East.

Iran: Commentary on Israel, Palestinian Self-Rule Government

LD0704134096 *Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian*
0955 GMT 7 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] With the nearing of the final talks between the Palestinians and the Zionist regime, Israel, using the elimination of articles in the Palestine National Charter on destruction of Israel as a pretext, has embarked on a new confrontation which — notwithstanding the campaigns for that regime's future elections — indicates that regime's posturing over the so-called final negotiations for determining the fate of the occupied territories. Some time ago, the Zionist regime's foreign minister, Ehud Barak, at a gathering of his party's supporters, while stressing the need to preserve and annex the Jewish inhabited townships and settlements in the occupied territories and the Jordan Valley, cried out: We will have the last word because we are stronger. That is when the Zionists are not prepared to show any flexibility with regard to issues such as Jerusalem and the Jewish settlements which constitute a significant part of the occupied territories. Moreover, the Israeli premier, Shim'on Peres, ties any agreement with the self-rule government to a referendum among the Jews.

Those statements are made under circumstances where that regime's actual measures against the Palestinians are intensifying daily and Israel exploits moves, such as sealing of the occupied lands and increasing suppression of Palestinian Muslims, as a lever to get further concessions from the self-rule government. The statements and actions by the Zionists — which indicate their main and final strategy in ignoring the spirit of the Oslo Agreement — have faced personalities such as Hanan 'Ashrawi, known for her support for the compromise process and one of its founders, with the reality that the Zionist regime's pursuit of peace is merely a cover for the realization of its new objectives. In future negotiations the Zionists will do their utmost to trample on their own undertakings.

Under such circumstances, it seems that the PLO and Palestinian personalities who support the compromise

intend to react in the face of the existing realities and the people's strong objections and somewhat review their reactive policies. For instance the PLO, on the one hand, has begun moves to establish contact with its opponents and coordinate with them to a certain extent. On the other hand, in order to confront the Zionists' pressure levers and while threatening that the self-rule government will carry out a referendum of its own if a referendum is carried out to confirm any possible agreements between PLO and Tel Aviv, the PLO has decided to wrench the threatening economic lever from the Zionist regime by creating enthusiasm in the occupied territories. This objective — just like PLO's earlier ones — seems ambitious and dream-like. Nevertheless, the confrontation between the Zionists and the self-rule government and the deep differences which have led to their confrontation raise this question: Will the compromise process get anywhere in its final stage, or with the passage of time will Yasir 'Arafat as well realize that a Palestinian government was no more than a mirage?

Iran: U.S. Accusations of Iran's Role in Bahrain Criticized

LD0804145996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 8 Apr 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The German News Agency, quoting the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Robert Pelletreau said on Sunday, April 7: Iran is involved in the crisis in Bahrain. According to the German News Agency, the American official expressed his statements in an interview with the Arab daily AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT published in London. He also said that although other factors are also involved in those disturbances, Tehran's role in the crisis cannot be overlooked. He claimed that many Shi'i leaders of Bahrain are being trained in Iran at the moment, and are in constant contact with officials in Tehran.

Bahrain has been involved in serious political disturbances in recent months and the Bahraini officials have repeatedly accused Iran of being involved in the unrest.

These statements by Pelletreau are repeats of similar claims which have been previously raised by Washington and Manama against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since the eruption of the unrest in Bahrain in December 1994 and the continuous suppression of people's rallies by government forces, different comments and theories have been put forth for causes and roots of the crisis in that emirate. What has been prevalent and suspicious in those evaluations, however, is the obvious distortion

of facts and reality and the misuse of disturbances in Bahrain, by both Washington and Manama.

There are numerous evidences that the United States is trying to frighten the Bahrain and other Arab leaders in the region by accusing Iran of having a hand in the crisis in Bahrain in order to prepare [the] grounds for the promotion of its destructive political objectives in the area.

Meanwhile, most political observers consider the Bahraini crisis to be the result of a grass-roots movement which is rooted in the negligence of that emirate's government toward popular demands in that shaykhdom. The reopening of the parliament is just one of the people's demands which has remained unanswered so far. Instead, the government, blaming foreign states for the crisis, is trying to evade its responsibilities to its people.

A quick look at the domestic problems in Bahrain such as the high rate of unemployment, the wide gap between different social classes and discrimination, specially against the Shi'ite community in that emirate, are amongst some of the many social factors which have provided the right kind of environment for [the] growth and spread of opposition to the ruling class in Bahrain. Naturally, in such a situation, the U.S. accusation of Iran's role in deepening the crisis in Bahrain, cannot be more than a simple, political and propaganda tactic, to cover up for the lack of democracy in that emirate.

Undoubtedly, this policy has not been devised to help relieve the crisis in Bahrain. It is just another ploy to further illegitimate American schemes in the region.

Iran: Azerbaijani Envoy Criticizes Anti-Iran Baku-Based Press

LD0804140796 Tehran IRNA in English 1344 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baku, April 8, IRNA — Azeri Ambassador to Tehran Elyar Seferli has criticized the publishing of anti-Iran articles in Azerbaijan's press, warning of the negative impacts of such articles on Tehran-Baku relations.

In an interview with Baku-based weekly YENI printed in its recent issue, Seferli put emphasis on the wide-scale historical bonds shared by the two countries and termed Iran as the second home country of the Azeri people.

He said the Azeris and the Persians have fought shoulder to shoulder against their common enemy and no other two countries are found in the world to share such extensive common historical bonds as Iran and Azerbaijan do.

Seferli said the Islamic Republic of Iran is not only a friendly and neighboring but also a brotherly country for the Azerbaijan Republic.

He referred to the anti-Azerbaijan articles in the Iranian press and said such articles are response to the anti-Iran stories published by the Baku-based newspapers run by the Azeri opposition groups.

YENI is the organ of the ruling party of "Yeni Azerbaijan" led by Heydar Aliyev.

The ambassador emphasized the expansion of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Azerbaijan Republic.

Iran: Officials Dispute Canceled Vote Results in 5 Districts

NC0804124896 Paris AFP in English
1242 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 7 (AFP)—The Iranian authorities have cancelled vote results for five districts in the first round of general elections, prompting a bitter row with local officials.

The Council of Guardians, which oversees the election process, said this week it had annulled the results for the central cities of Esfahan, Najafabad and Na'in as well as western Malayer and Miandoab because of "irregularities" during or ahead of the March 8 polls.

The council, which is dominated by influential right-wing conservative clergymen, said numerous campaign violations had been committed in Esfahan, which is allotted five seats in the 270-member parliament, accusing "certain candidates" of "deceiving and buying off voters and using anti-revolutionary" campaign slogans.

The decision provoked sharp protests from Esfahan's moderate governor, Eshaq Jahangiri, who publicly blamed the decision on "extremist elements" in the delegation sent to Esfahan by the guardians to monitor the election process.

The crucial polls set the two main factions within the Iranian regime — the moderates and hardline conservatives — against each other and the two sides were locked in unprecedented cut-throat rivalry for seats.

SALAM newspaper, which sympathizes with the moderates, said Saturday the conservatives had made a poor showing in Esfahan, despite their clear lead in other parts of the country.

Ayatollah Taheri, Friday prayer leader in Esfahan, vehemently criticized this week the cancellation "without any reason" of the results. Prayer leaders are assigned

to every city or town in Iran and they command formidable authority.

Only one of the five seats allocated to Esfahan had been decided in the first round. The winner, Nayereh Akhavan, was the wife of Hasan Kamran, an influential MP who had been disqualified from re-running.

The Council of Guardians has not provided reasons for the cancellation of results in the four other constituencies.

The city of Najafabad, whose votes were also cancelled, is a stronghold of Ayatollah Hoseyn-'Ali Montazeri, a once influential clergyman who was disgraced in the 1980s after opposing Iran's late paramount leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeyni.

The cancellation of results in Miandoab, a town in the northwestern Azerbaijan province, could be linked to the violence which reportedly erupted in the nearby district of Bonab the day after the polls.

Several people were wounded in clashes with security forces in Bonab after residents protested "fraudulent" voting, according to the witnesses.

A total of 139 seats were decided in the first round of the polls, around a 100 of which were swept by the conservatives, who dominated the outgoing parliament.

The second round is to be held on April 19.

Iran: Official Says Elections in 77 Constituencies on 19 Apr

LD0804062696 Tehran IRNA in English
0611 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 8, IRNA — Run-off elections for the Fifth Majles will be held in 77 constituencies to elect 125 deputies on April 19, said head of the elections headquarters of the Interior Ministry, 'Ali Reza Tabesh, here Sunday night [7 April].

Elections were held in 196 constituencies on Friday March 8 for the 270-seat Majles.

Contending candidates are to launch election campaigns for the run-off elections next Thursday, said Tabesh adding that 250 candidates will compete in the elections.

Electorates will cast their votes for 28 candidates from among 56 contenders in Tehran constituency, Rey, Shemiranat and Islamshahr, he added.

List of the contenders will be released on Wednesday and the election campaign will last for a week, ending 24 hours before the ballot polls open, he concluded.

Iran: Draft Plan for Eradication of Poverty Drawn Up

*LD0804071596 Tehran IRNA in English
0654 GMT 8 Apr 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, April 8, IRNA — Vice-president and head of Plan and Budget Organization, Hamid Mirzadeh here Sunday [7 April] said that the draft plan for eradication of poverty has been drawn and will be put forward to the cabinet ministers in June.

Mirzadeh further added that following the call by the leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i and President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on planning state economy without relying on oil and by boosting non-oil exports, a secretariat is to be set up at the organization in the next few days to review practical ways of reaching this goal.

The best way to eradicate poverty throughout the country is to control inflation and to increase country's revenues through taxation, he underlined.

Turning to last year's budget, Mirzadeh noted that 104 percent of the current expenditures as well as 98.9 percent of development budget have been paid.

Foreign currency revenue of the country last year (ended March 19) amounted to over dlr. 15 billion, he said adding, the tax revenues last year registered an increase of 48 percent as compared to the preceding year.

Meanwhile, he reported that the general budget of the current Iranian year which is equal to rls. 61,124,000 billion shows a reasonable growth as compared to last year's rls. 42,000 billion budget.

Nepal & Bhutan

Nepal: 'Little' Achievement Foreseen in Refugee Talks With Bhutan

*BK0904070196 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU
POST in English 8 Apr 96*

[Report by a "POST reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, April 7 — The third day's talks between Nepal and Bhutan concluded within minutes today, giving the clearest indication yet that the current bilateral talks, as six previous rounds, would achieve little in resolving the refugee stalemate.

The talks were adjourned until noon tomorrow upon 'request' from the Bhutanese foreign minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering. Bhutan said that it wanted more time for consultation on issues raised by the Nepalese side in the document submitted by the latter yesterday.

Nepal had submitted a document explaining its stand on the refugee issue as well as the ways of implementing

them to the Bhutanese side yesterday on which discussions were to be held today.

Officials from both the sides, however, worked for the finalisation of a joint press statement which is scheduled to be made public after a "short meeting" between the two parties tomorrow.

A source in the Foreign Ministry said the Bhutanese side is "not positive at all" towards solving the problem and "there are less chances that the issue would be resolved through bilateral talks."

The Bhutanese delegation is scheduled to fly back home tomorrow afternoon.

Nepal: Prime Minister Urges Private Sector To Boost Exports

*BK0904072596 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU
POST in English 8 Apr 96*

[Report by a "POST reporter" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kathmandu, April 7 — Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba has urged the private sector to find ways to boost export to help minimize the trade deficit fuelled by rising import.

Deuba said that government aimed to enhance participation of the private sector, adding the nation's development would be impossible without the growth of the private sector.

Deuba made the remarks today while inaugurating the 28th annual general meeting of Nepal Chamber of Commerce.

But the private sector made no attempts to hide its displeasure at official policies.

In his welcome address, Ishwor Lal Shrestha, President of Nepal Chamber of Commerce said the Chamber was "really surprised" by the government's decision to enforce VAT from the coming fiscal year.

He added that VAT (Value Added Tax) has been successful only in those countries which are developed in every sector like industry, trade, transportation and education. "But it will be totally unscientific, impractical and non-visionary to enforce this tax system in Nepal," he said.

Shrestha revealed the Chamber's decision to carry out a detailed study on requirements of VAT and its possible negative impact. He also suggested that government take further decisions only after having a thorough discussion on Chamber's report.

He pointed out that Nepal Chamber of Commerce, Nepal's oldest trade association is feeling discarded.

Despite the 43-year old association's contribution in the overall aspects of economic development of the country the government has been cutting its representation from some official committees.

Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat tried to reassure the business community, saying the government had taken pro-business and pro-industry economic policies. "Though it is very hard to admit being a politician, I'm announcing that we are a pro-business sector," he said.

Mahat asked private sector not to be involved in minor issues like VAT (Value Added Tax) and octroi (entry tax). "VAT and octroi are no more a problem. We need a vision to enhance annual rate of economic growth," he said.

"Our major hurdles are export promotion, infrastructure development, macro-economic stability and overall economic growth," he said.

"I want private sector to challenge government in order to gain higher economic growth. In that case we are ready to modify rules and regulations," he added. "The nation can't survive without promoting export. Either you export or you perish," Mahat stressed.

Nepal: Editorial Notes Achievements of No-Trust Motion Defeat

BK0904044296 Kathmandu THE KATHMANDU POST in English 7 Apr 96

[Editorial: "Fallout of the No-Trust Motion" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The defeat of the UML [United Marxist Leninists] sponsored no-trust motion against the Sher Bahadur Deuba-led coalition could prove a boon in disguise for the country's politics. This is despite the fact that the no-trust motion has cost the country's exchequer dear. The no-trust motion, quite apart from preventing G.P. Koirala from assuming the Nepali Congress [NC] party leadership, has thrown the younger generation of NC leadership to the fore. Sher Bahadur Deuba has emerged, through his first government crisis, a much stronger and determined leader. He should now build upon this god-send opportunity if over-ambitious, over-aged and out-dated leaders are not to try to wrest power.

The coalition, an unabashed marriage of convenience, has survived. But there is no saying when and by whom the rug will be pulled from under its feet. The no-trust vote of 106 No's and 90 Yes's seemingly gives an appearance of comfortable majority for the government. But the reality is quite different. The coalition is very precariously balanced and there is no saying when the collapse might occur. True, all coalition partners, the

NC, the RPP [Rashtriya Prajatantra Party] and Nepal Sadhabana Party want the government to live out its full term. Parliamentary elections must be held before November 1999 as the last mid-term polls were held in November 1994. Most political observers here had given the coalition two years before it would begin to fall apart. Who would have predicted, that within six months, the coalition would be rendered fragile and on the verge of collapse? The uncertainty and lust for power that have marked Nepalese politics are mainly responsible for this. Both these distinguishing traits of Nepalese politics are very much present today.

The much touted national convention of the NC was the first causality of the crisis in national politics. The former prime minister, Girija Prasad Koirala, had publicly thrown his hat in the ring for the presidency. The Koirala loyalists, as indeed all neutral observers, had been certain of his election. Despite grumbling and outright rejection of Koirala by a section of the NC, his hold among the workers would have ensured his election. It is said — and not perhaps without foundation — that one of the main objectives of the UML sponsored motion of no confidence against the coalition government was to prevent the former prime minister and rabid communist hater, G.P. Koirala, from assuming the top NC position. The ramifications of the G.P. Koirala heading the NC could well be another round of government instability.

The coalition in the present form has a much less chance of continuing with Koirala calling the tune than at present. Soon after the mid-term polls in 1994, the formation of the government was a major problem. During the negotiations that took place, the key party for any coalition, the RPP had made it abundantly clear that it would have nothing to do with any coalition that had G.P. Koirala at its helm. The image of the 1991-1994 NC government was determined to a large extent by the Tanakpur understanding which G.P. Koirala entered into with India during his official visit to that country at the end of 1991. G.P. Koirala as NC president cannot be expected to be like K.P. Bhattarai who has by and large left the present government and its head Sher Bahadur Deuba alone to carry out the affairs of the state.

The 'fast unto death' by NC activists to pressurise the NC President, K.P. Bhattarai, to immediately fix a date for the postponed NC national convention is a sure sign of desperation on the part of the Koirala loyalists. The impatience shown by the Koirala loyalists should be understood in view of the fact that the more the younger leaders of the party become entrenched, the more neglected they will become and their clout wear off. In addition, away from power is away from pelf and other goodies of power. But sooner or later,

the NC convention must be held, specially so as the NC considers itself to be a democratic party. National conventions and elections are keys to democratisation of the party apparatus.

Considering the not-so-hidden implications of Koirala as NC president which seems unstoppable despite some opposition, the Prime Minister will have to be more assertive and firm than he has been. This is needed to keep his ministers belonging to his party as well as to two other coalition partners in rein. The grievances of one coalition partner against ministers belonging to the other are galore. The eye is on the next election whether mid term or regular. Yet governance of the country should not be done with the eye to the elections. This has been the bane of South Asian politics. The present coalition must be allowed to carry out the commonly agreed upon programmes and the Prime Minister must pull up any minister, whether belonging to his own party or to that of any of the two other coalition partners, when they exceed their briefs or when they indulge in blatantly partisan politics at tax payers expenses. Sher Bahadur Deuba's firmness of purpose will be demonstrated by such principled actions. He must show the same firmness that he displayed during the press meet in New Delhi during his official visit there in February. By so doing, Deuba took the sails off the RPP and the UML each of which had been claiming that it is the only nationalist party in the country. (No wonder, the UML President immediately criticised the Prime Minister as lacking diplomatic finesse.) Taking stands on principles, specially when national interests are at stake, against India or China or Pakistan or the U.S. or any other country is always appreciated.

The second generation of the NC leaders are as capable as any others to run the country and run it well without replicating the mistakes of the past. Despite the age of their prime minister during the UML rule, the government was run for all intents and purpose by young leaders. In the NC, apart from the Prime Minister, there are persons like the Speaker, Ram Chandra Poudel, the former Speaker Daman Nath Dhumgana, to name just a few, and others, some of whom are ministers and some outside the government. This cream of NC leadership has not been utilised properly and this could well be the reason why NC has not been able to gain as much votes in parliamentary elections as it had hoped to. Deuba will have to consolidate his position through visible actions if the old guard is not to challenge him. He owes this not only to himself but all other second generation leaders in his party. It matters little whether Deuba continues to be prime minister or not but it is important that the mantle must remain with the

second generation. This could be the notable substantial achievement of the UML's no-confidence motion.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Government, Opposition Leaders Warned of Assassination Plot

BK0904065296 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 9 Apr 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by Lahore correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Text] The federal intelligence agencies have warned the government that a prominent political figure may be murdered in the next few days. The government has passed along this warning to the opposition. The federal government has advised government and opposition leaders to cut down on their activities. Sources say the objective of this planned murder is to destabilize the government and create unrest in the country.

Pakistan: Minister Reports 'Plot' To Replace Bhutto Government

BK0904093096 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 9 Apr 96 pp 1, 14

[Report by Sikandar Hayat]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Authorities have uncovered a plot to replace the Benazir Bhutto government with an interim set-up comprising a number of retired senior generals and bureaucrats, Federal Minister Sher Afgan said here on Monday [8 April] night.

Talking informally to a group of reporters, he said according to the plot, the details of which were brought to the notice of the cabinet at its meeting on Monday morning, the new set-up was to be headed by a former general and foreign minister. A former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief was to be the defense minister in the new government.

The present anti-government agitation in Lahore by the opposition has been inspired by the plotters, Sher Afgan said, but he thought that Nawaz Sharif who is spear-heading the agitation, had been trapped into the scheme.

Interior Minister Nasirullah Babar was expected to give details of the unsuccessful plot on the floor of the Assembly on Tuesday but due to the continuing debate on the death of PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] leader Javaid Ashraf he could not do so on Monday.

The armed groups, which Nawaz Sharif is being accused of setting up in Lahore, were supplied with specially

manufactured iron nails which were to be sowed on roads in Lahore to paralyse the traffic. In addition to these nails, weighing about 28 tons, some weapons have also been distributed to these groups, Sher Afgan claimed.

The minister said Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Hamid Gul "trapped" Nawaz Sharif into this conspiracy, assuring the former prime minister that the interim set-up will last at least two years.

He was, however, categorical that the armed forces are not involved in this plot.

Information Minister Khalid Ahmad Kharal, in his briefing to reporters about the Cabinet meeting, said that Opposition Leader Nawaz Sharif aided and abetted by "extremist forces" had drawn up a plot to stir up violence in various parts of the country in early April when the PPP (Pakistan People's Party) leadership was to be busy in connection with the death anniversary of late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Pakistan: Report Views Possible Unabomber Connection to Peshawar

BK0604120096 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 6 Apr 96 pp 1, 12

[Report by Ismail Khan]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — Peshawar and Afghanistan may yet again come into sharp focus in the context of international terrorism with latest discoveries that the Unabomber suspect in the United States, Theodore Kaczynski, might have lived here at the height of the Afghan war during 1982-87.

Ted Kaczynski, 53, a former university math professor, was jailed last week after federal agents raided and searched his mountain home near Lincoln, Montana. US federal agents described Kaczynski — a Harvard graduate who briefly taught mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley — as a "very strong suspect" in string of bombings that began in 1978 and ended last year. Investigators tracking down the elusive serial killer, gave him the code name of Unabomber because of his early targets were universities and airlines.

US investigators going through Ted's academic record have discovered him listing himself in the 1982 Harvard alumni directory as residing at 788 Banchat Peshawar and Khadarkhel in Afghanistan. In the 1987 directory, he was still listed as living there as his last known address.

While there is no known place as Banchat in Peshawar and senior police investigators were unable to say whether Ted had given the correct address or whether

he really was in the Frontier metropolis at all, the suspected Unabomber's address in Afghanistan does seem to be correct. Khadarkhel is small village in Khugiani district, some 50 kilometers southwest of Jalalabad, capital of Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province. The mountainous region, inhabited by the Pashtun Shinwari tribe, was among the so-called liberated areas after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and under the control of Commander Haji Zaman of National Islamic Front of Afghanistan. Zaman was previously associated with the Hezb-e Eslami of Golboddin Hekmatyar.

The US Consulate in Peshawar and its Embassy in Islamabad are closed for Easter holidays and could not be approached for comments but investigators are still to find out whether Ted had a passport or had in fact travelled to Pakistan and thence to Afghanistan or was it that he had read about these places and fancied them. Afghan leaders associated with the Jihad were also unable to recollect Kaczynski, except for the CIA agents and instructors who were actively involved in the battle against the Soviets.

Peshawar and Afghanistan which remained in the media lime light during the Afghan war, later unfortunately, came to be associated with international terrorism networks. It was the 1992 World Trade Centre bombing, that put the US investigators on the tracks of its mastermind, Ramzi Yusuf and his associates to Peshawar.

Pakistan: Leghari Discusses U.S. Role in Region With Senator Brown

BK0704165096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 7 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan and the United States can play a very positive role for peace and stability in the region and the world. He said this while talking to Senator Hank Brown, who called on him in Islamabad today. The president said Pakistan does not want an arms race in the region but, at the same time, cannot ignore its security interests in view of our real threat perception from India. He said India must agree to a peaceful solution of the Kashmir problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions. He hoped the United States would use its influence for the just cause of self-determination of the people of Kashmir. He said Pakistan also wants peace in Afghanistan under the United Nations umbrella, in which the interests of all ethnic groups are taken into account. The president also conferred the award of Nishan-i-Qaid-i-Azam on Senator Hank Brown in recognition of his active and major role for passage of the Brown Amendment, which is a step forward in improving the long-standing relations between the United States and Pakistan.

Pakistan: Foreign, Defense Ministers Hold Talks With U.S. Senator Brown

BK0804133996 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan is against proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region and is making all efforts to ensure peace and stability in South Asia. This was stated by Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali while talking to the visiting American Senator Hank Brown in Islamabad. The foreign minister said Pakistan is extremely concerned about the preparations for another thermonuclear test being made in India, which has been widely reported in the Western press. He said such a development will endanger the peace in the entire region. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali apprised Mr. Brown about the fast aggravating human rights situation in held Kashmir. About Afghanistan, he said Pakistan supports an early end to civil war in that country and establishment of a broad-based government which includes all the political groups. Senator Hank Brown endorsed this view, stating this is the only solution to end the crisis in Afghanistan. He appreciated Pakistan's efforts for an early conclusion of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. The two leaders also reviewed the progress in Pakistan-U.S. bilateral relations as well as implementation of Brown Amendment.

Senator Hank Brown also called on the federal minister for defense, Mr. Aftab Shaban Mirani, in Islamabad today. The defense minister appreciated the efforts of Senator Brown, which he made to amend the Pressler Amendment and said that after the passage of Brown Amendment, avenues of cooperation in economic field as well as release of defense equipment are now a possibility. Mr. Mirani, while discussing the regional situation, expressed his concern on the aggressive designs of its neighbor and said its devastating missile program is a security threat for South Asia. He elaborated that the will of the Kashmiri people cannot be subjugated indefinitely. Senator Brown hoped that his visit would lead to closer understanding between the two countries.

U.S. Senator Hank Brown left Islamabad for Kabul this morning for talks with Afghan leaders. Mr. Brown plans to meet Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani and Rashid Dostam during his two-day visit to Afghanistan. Sources said in Islamabad today the senator would exchange views with Afghan leaders on the overall situation in Afghanistan.

Pakistan: Nuclear Smuggling From Former Soviet Republics Denied

BK0504093296 Islamabad THE NATION in English 5 Apr 96 p 14

[NNI report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Pakistani terming the report of smuggling of enriched uranium and other material for making atomic weapons from former Soviet Republics as baseless, malicious and intentioned has strongly refuted that this sensitive material after illegal trade was exhibited in the bazaar of Peshawar.

Commenting on the report here Thursday [5 April], which appeared in a section of Western press, the Pakistani officials asserted that there was not even an iota of truth in these allegations. Islamabad termed the allegations as a part of Western & Indian propaganda machinery who earlier allegedly tried to involve Pakistan in the purchase of 5,000 Ring Magnets from China for allegedly developing the nuclear weapons. Whereas under the safeguard of IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] China has established 300 MW Nuclear Power Generation Plant at Chashma Mianawali and both the countries only are coordinating in atomic field for its use of peaceful purposes.

The exports elaborated that the movement of such sensitive and radioactive materials require special containers and handling and transit arrangements which cannot be undertaken without the supervision and stringent control of nuclear experts.

In any case such a smuggling cannot possibly be compared with the smuggling of small arms and ammunition which is done by undertaking normal precaution around the world. More so, it requires the active connivance of responsible officials of the countries where these top security installations are located. It may not be out of place to recall that all nuclear weapons materials from the former Soviet republics (CARS) bordering Afghanistan was airlifted under an agreement by the U.S. during the previous year. Security measures included refuelling the aircrafts carrying the sensitive material in air while on their journey to US, reminded the experts.

The report of smuggling of enriched uranium into Pakistan appears to have been planted by inimical lobbyists with the intention of creating a scare amongst the Western public.

It is a part of the same smear anti-Pakistan propaganda which has been unleashed recently in the Western press, especially in the context of Pakistan-China nuclear co-operation, which actually is under full U.N. safeguards.

Pakistan: Nuclear Scientist Comments on 'Latest Weapons'

BK0804084296 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 7 Apr 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by "special correspondent" in Islamabad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Renowned nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan has said that India will not commit the folly of attacking Pakistan. By the grace of God, Pakistan possesses weapons that can counter every Indian weapon. He said that Pakistani experts are closely watching India's military preparations and are working day and night to equip Pakistan's armed forces with the latest weapons.

Dr. A.Q. Khan said that Pakistani experts are manufacturing military equipment at less than half its purchasing price, and are supplying it to the army. These comments were made during an exclusive chat with JANG. Dr. Qadeer said that Pakistan has prepared a new "line charge" to clear land mines. It can completely clear all land mines in a strip measuring 200 meters long and 12 feet wide. The price of this equipment in foreign countries is \$10,000, but we have manufactured it for less than \$5,000, and it has been tested successfully. We have also modified the "laser-range Finder." Before firing the anti-tank missiles, this laser range finder is used for judging the exact distance between the missile and the enemy's tanks and other military equipment. This can be purchased for \$16,000, but we have made it for less than \$8,000.

In response to a question Dr. A.Q. Khan, who heads Khan Research Laboratories, said that the "Multiple Barrel Rocket Launcher," designed by the Khan Research Laboratories, is capable of destroying enemy troops in an area of 28 kilometers within mere seconds. This launcher can fire 30 rockets at one time. He said that "Anza" missiles are also being improved. Anza-1 is capable of destroying airplanes that fly four kilometers in the sky. It has also been equipped with the guidance system. Not only can it destroy aircraft, but it can also target planes that are coming in for an attack. Its speed has increased to 600 meters per second.

Pakistan: PRC Trade Delegation Says PRC Ready To Increase Imports

BK0804082296 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 8 Apr 96 p 4

[Report from Karachi Bureau]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] China is highly concerned at its trade imbalance with Pakistan and is keen to remove the distortions. The leader of 33 member visiting trade

delegation of China An Chengxi said here Sunday that his country was willing to import more from Pakistan.

Speaking at a luncheon reception hosted in the honor of visiting trade team the leader of Chinese delegation urged the need to expand manufacturing sector in Pakistan and diversity trade with China.

During the last two years Pakistan's exports to China increased from 53.66 million U.S. dollar in 1993-94 to 90.62 million in 1994-95 whereas Pakistan's imports increased for 439 million U.S. dollar in 1993-94 to 458.04 million U.S. dollar in 1994-95. In this way the two way trade between Pakistan and china is not substantial.

He said China was anxious to expand trade ties with Pakistan and was also interested in undertaking joint venture and joint collaboration in industrial sector.

The leader of the Chinese delegation praised the liberalization of the economic and trade policy of Pakistan which he hoped in the coming days would pave way for productive trade cooperation between two countries.

He expressed the hope that with expansion of economic activities, Pakistan would offer better trade prospects. He said Pakistan needed to develop its basic infrastructure for giving fillip to trade. China is deeply interested in the development of Pakistan and willing to extend all possible cooperation in this matter, he said adding that in the past the two countries had very good relations in the field of trade and industry.

The Chinese trade team during its stay in the city would exchange views with the business community and explore the possibility of expanding the two-way trade possibility of under taking joint ventures between private sector of two countries would also be examined.

China favors frequent exchange of such visits between two countries at various level to help cement friendly ties, he said.

Earlier, welcoming the Chinese trade team, the president of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry [KCCI], Haji Shafiq-ur-Rehman said privatization and liberation of economy the investment climate in Pakistan had brightened up and it now offered very good potential. He said Pakistan was expecting investment from China and strengthening of business and trade ties between two countries. The KCCI Chief remarked that in the past China had helped Pakistan in the setting up of heavy industry.

The visiting trade delegation is quite broad-based and consists of groups from different fields including textile machinery, medicine and health products, automobiles,

power energy, finance, banking, construction, transport and shipping etc.

Pakistan: Leghari Orders Punjab Authorities To Keep Law, Order

BK0904082096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 9 Apr 96 p 1

[Report by THE NATION correspondent in Lahore]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — President Farooq Leghari has directed the Punjab administration to maintain law and order in the province at all costs and take stern action against those who are prone to disrupt public order irrespective of their political affiliations or social status. The administration, however, while taking action against miscreants should not behave in a manner which can provide the Opposition a chance to accuse the government of political victimisation, he added.

This was the upshot of a meeting at State Guest House here, attended by, besides the President, Governor Raja Saroop, Chief Minister Arif Nakai, Senior Minister Mushtaq Awa, Chief Secretary, IGP (Inspector General of Police) and other officials.

The President spent a busy day in Lahore arriving in the morning to attend first convocation of National Academy of Sciences Pakistan then holding a meetings with the administration two delegations representing Jamia Ashrafia and Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

During the high-level meeting the IGP briefed the President about the recent clashes between the police and the PML (N) [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz] workers following the Party's Lahore chapter Additional Secretary Javaid Ashraf's killing on The Mall.

According to sources the IGP informed the President that Javaid Ashraf was not killed by a policeman, as generally believed. He died by the firing of bank guard who fired in self defence after his bank's Manager and a waiter of a restaurant sustained bullet injuries in the firing of 'miscreants' accompanying deceased Javaid Ashraf.

Governor Raja Saroop, the Chief Minister and the Senior Minister briefed the President about the steps taken by the government to maintain public order in the province. The Governor said that soon a Lahore High Court Judge would be assigned to hold an enquiry into the incident in which Javaid Ashraf was killed. The Judge would submit its report within 15 days after the beginning of the judicial probe.

President Farooq Leghari directed the Punjab administration to take action against those who are bent upon

spreading lawlessness, sounding a note that it should not in anyway take such steps as could be construed victimisation of the opposition by any quarters.

Pakistan: Cabinet Says Opposition Plotting 'Bloodshed, Anarchy'

BK0804135296 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Federal Cabinet, which was informed about the opposition's plan to disrupt law and order in the country, has expressed its determination to frustrate the evil designs of all those who are out to destroy peace and harmony. The meeting held in Islamabad was chaired by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The cabinet noted with satisfaction that in the last couple of weeks Pakistan has repaid \$1 billion of its debt. It also expressed satisfaction over the foreign exchange reserve position. The cabinet considered the recent trend of sugar price hike and approved a number of measures to arrest it as well as to ensure availability of sugar to consumers at a reasonable price. The law and order situation in the country was also discussed during the meeting.

Briefing newsmen, the federal minister for information and broadcasting, Mr. Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, said:

[Begin recording] During a discussion on the law and order situation, the cabinet was informed that reports have been received that the leader of the opposition [Mohammad Nawaz Sharif], aided and abetted by extremist forces, has drawn up a plan to stir up violence in different parts of the country and primarily in the city of Lahore beginning early this month when the PPP [Pakistan People's Party] leaders were busy in connection with the death anniversary of late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The cabinet was further informed that groups of 20 armed persons per ward are reported to have been raised in Lahore to cause bloodshed and anarchy. The leader of the opposition is also reported to have established contacts with various ethnic and sectarian groups having military training and asked them for assistance. Similar contacts are also to be made with Altaf Group and Sipah-i-Sahaba [militant Sunni organization], Pakistan. In this connection, the meeting noted a statement of the former chief of Army staff, General Aslam Beg, on 4 April about a conspiracy of the government and one by Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, MNA [Member of National Assembly] who claimed on the floor of the house that there was a plot to assassinate him and put the blame on the PPP. [end recording]

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Official Denies Mass Exodus of People From Jaffna Areas

BK0804134796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English
1045 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government agent of Jaffna, who is now based in the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]-controlled town of Chavakachcheri in the (Tinnamarachchi) division of the northern peninsula has confirmed that the full population of 500,000 residents of the Vadamarachchi and (Tinnamarachchi) divisions in Jaffna are continuing to live there. He has requested the commissioner general of essential services to continue supplying the food and other items at a normal level, which is 5,500 to 6,000 tons a month. This nails the LTTE canard being spread internationally through its London secretariat that there was a mass exodus of people from these areas fearing an imminent security forces' offensive. Official sources said that 300,000 residents and 200,000 refugees forced out of their homes in Jaffna city and the Velikamam division by the LTTE continue to remain in Vadamarachchi and (Tinnamarachchi). According to intelligence reports, even the residents of Valvedditurai, Prabhakaran's native village in the northeastern seaboard of Jaffna, have refused point blank to the LTTE call to leave their homes as they preferred to live under the administration of the Sri Lankan Government rather than under brutal Tiger terrorism. The people of Vadamarachchi and (Tinnamarachchi) have told the LTTE's area leader that they were not willing to suffer the same fate as that of the residents of Jaffna city, who had left their homes and were now living in Kilinochchi in small [word indistinct] sheds with basic amenities and very little food and have been forced to sell their gold to the LTTE at a very cheap price.

Sri Lanka: Hindu Congress Urges Government, LTTE To Observe Cease-Fire

BK0804133796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English
1045 GMT 8 Apr 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The All Ceylon Hindu Congress has appealed to President Chandrika Kumaratunga to declare a cease-fire before the Sinhala and Tamil new year. In a statement signed by General Secretary Kondiah Neelakandan, the Hindu Congress said such a bold step will pave the way for peace in the new year.

The Congress has also appealed to the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to cooperate in the maintenance of a genuine cease-fire. The Hindu Congress has also

called upon the government to create an atmosphere conducive to the people of the north and the east to live as citizens of this country in a very real sense. The statement said unless an atmosphere conducive for the people to live as citizens is created, there will be no purpose in discussing political solutions or suggesting amendments to the government political package.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Says Hindu Clergy Seeking Aid From Indian Counterparts

BK0804125596 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 3 Apr 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Three Muslim civilians were killed in the indiscriminate and dastardly missile attacks carried out by Sri Lankan troops against the Thiagavettuvan locality in the Batticaloa District. A Muslim woman's leg was seriously injured in a missile attack launched simultaneously from the Valaichchenai paper mill. Five more Muslim civilians were injured in this terrorist attack.

Meanwhile, intense and constant missile attacks are being carried out against the Vadamarachchi locality. Four civilians were injured during a missile attack against Vadamarachchi the day before yesterday. Bombers and helicopter gunships carried out attacks at the same time.

Two civilians were seriously wounded and a house was damaged during indiscriminate missile attacks carried out on the night of 31 March by Sri Lankan troops from the Palali military base against civilian locations in Mattuvel.

Sri Lankan police personnel arrested and took away 12 civilians who were returning after a harvesting operation in the village of Kerativu in Batticaloa District on 15 March. When the relatives of the arrested persons went to a nearby police station and inquired about them, the policemen declined to say anything. The relatives of the detained persons are very worried because they know nothing about their current condition.

It has been learned that a soldier was killed the day before yesterday in a clash between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] and Sri Lankan troops in Pandattarippu. Simultaneously, there was another confrontation in the area of Velikamam. There has been no report of any casualties.

There was a clash between the LTTE and troops in Kandarodai on the morning of 1 April. At the same time, the LTTE cadres who had infiltrated the area of Sudumalai attacked the military post there. Details on the losses are not known.

The council of Hindu clergy from the northeastern province has sent an appeal to Bal Thackarey, leader

of the Shiv Sena organization in India. Pointing out the threat of the annihilation of the entire Hindu community posed by the Sri Lankan Government's planned military action, the appeal also stresses the need for the existence of a Tamil Eelam motherland in order to enable the Tamil people to live in liberty and prosperity. Copies of the appeal, which calls for recognizing the freedom struggle of Tamil Eelam, the LTTE, and its leader Prabhakaran, as well as for exerting pressure on the Sri Lankan Government through the Government of India to stop the operation against the Tamil people, have been sent to the heads of Hindu religious seats in Kanchipuram, Madurai, Dharmapuram, and Thiruvavaduthurai.

A London-based international organization called "Article-19," which works against press censorship,

has issued a report condemning the media censorship carried out by the Sri Lankan Government. The report entitled "Silent War" also condemns the human rights violations committed by the Sri Lankan Government. The report points out the fact that the government does not even let reporters approach and elicit information from the people displaced by the military action carried out by Sri Lankan Government troops.

A shooting incident between the supporters of Chandrika Kumaratunga's party and the United National Party (UNP) took place at Anamaduwa, 120 km north of Colombo the day before yesterday. Fourteen people were seriously injured in the incident that occurred at a meeting organized by the UNP.

The Tigers' aspirations: Motherland of Tamil Eelam!

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